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AN ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

JAMES BEATTIE, LL.D.

LATE PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY AND LOGIC IN THE MARISCHAL COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN.

INCLUDING

MANY OF HIS ORIGINAL LETTERS.

BY SIR WILLIAM FORBES,

OF PITSLIGO, BART.

ONE OF THE EXECUTORS OF DR BEATTIE.

Earum rerum omnium vel in primis hic fructum a me repetere prope suo jure debet. Nam hunc video mihi principem, et ad suscipiendam, et ad ingrediendam rationem horum studiorum extitisse.

CICERO *pro Archia.*

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1806.

INTRODUCTION.

MR MASON prefaces his excellent and entertaining Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Gray,* with an observation, more remarkable for its truth than novelty, that "the lives of men "of letters seldom abound with incidents. A reader of sense and "taste, therefore," continues he, "never expects to find, in the "memoirs of a philosopher or poet, the same species of entertain- "ment or information which he would receive from those of a "statesman or general. He expects, however, to be either in- "formed or entertained. Nor will he be disappointed, did the "writer take care to dwell principally on such topics as charac- "terize the man, and distinguish that peculiar part which he acted "in the varied drama of society."

Keeping in view this rule of Mr Mason's, it is my purpose to give to the world some account of the late DR BEATTIE; a man, whose life, if it does not afford many striking incidents, yet furnishes no unuseful lesson, and no mean incentive, to men of genius, how obscure soever their origin may be, or unpromising their early prospects; as it shews the degree of celebrity and independence at which they may reasonably hope to arrive, by the exertion of those talents which they inherit from Nature, and a virtuous conduct in the society in which Providence has placed them.

Before I enter, however, on this undertaking, I deem it necessary to offer some apology for my attempting it at all. I wish, indeed, that it had fallen to the lot of some other person better

* Vol. II. p. 1. Ed. 12mo.

I shall only add farther, that I have been scrupulous in not admitting any thing that I thought would hurt the feelings of others; nor any anecdote or opinion which Dr Beattie himself could have wished to have suppressed. As an Editor, I have not taken the liberty to add a single iota to what Dr Beattie has written; but I have thought myself fully warranted in omitting, without scruple, whatever it seemed to me that he would not have permitted to see the light.

When I consider the very great number of his letters, which I have been able to recover, some of them of great length, besides many more that he must have written to his other correspondents, which have escaped my research, or have not been deemed worth the preserving; when I consider, too, the labour he bestowed in composing, as well as transcribing over and over again (for he seldom employed an amanuensis,) his works for the press, and at the same time think of the deplorable state of his health, and that he employed three hours every day, for almost half the year, in teaching his class, I cannot but be filled with wonder how he could possibly have contrived to write so much, preserving and enjoying at the same time suitable intercourse with society.*

After these few introductory observations, I now proceed, with the utmost diffidence, to submit the following narrative to the candour and indulgence of the public.

* I have retained the ancient custom of placing the notes at the bottom of the page, though in opposition to the authority of some distinguished historical and biographical writers, who throw all their notes, how short soever, to the end of the volume; a mode which I have always thought extremely inconvenient for the reader. When notes run to such a length, however, as to break the narrative too much, they will be found, by references, in the Appendix.

LIFE OF

JAMES BEATTIE, LL. D.

SECTION I.

FROM DR BEATTIE'S BIRTH, IN THE YEAR 1735, TO HIS ESTABLISHMENT AT ABERDEEN, IN THE YEAR 1758.

JAMES BEATTIE, LL. D. was born on the 25th October, 1735, at Lawrencekirk,* at that time an obscure hamlet in the county of Kincardine in Scotland. His father was James Beattie, who, at the same time that he kept a small retail shop in the

* Lawrencekirk, which is situated twenty-eight miles south from Aberdeen, owes its rise, from so slender a beginning, to the rank of a borough of barony (as such small towns are called in Scotland, holding a rank somewhat above that of a village) to the ardent spirit of Lord Gardenstown, and the great encouragement he bestowed on it, at a very considerable expence.—Any farther account of Lawrencekirk, however, is foreign from my present purpose. I may merely add, that the house in which Dr Beattie was born, stood on a rising ground at the north-east end of the village, at no great distance from the site of the present inn, from which it was separated by a small rivulet. On the same spot is now built a house inhabited by a nephew of Dr Beattie's. And it has been remarked by some who are fond of fanciful analogies, that, as the tomb of Virgil, in the neighbourhood of Naples, was adorned with a laurel, the birth-place of Beattie was partly covered with ivy, as if to denote that it had produced a poet. The banks of the rivulet are beautifully fringed with wild roses, where Dr Beattie had been accustomed to spend his playful hours when at school, and which he delighted to contemplate each time he passed through Lawrencekirk, with that enthusiasm with which we revisit, in after life, the haunts of our boyish days.

village, rented a little farm in the neighbourhood, on which, and on a similar spot about a mile distant, his forefathers, for several generations, had carried on the same useful employment of agriculture. His mother's name was Jean Watson; and they had six children, of whom the youngest was James, the subject of these memoirs. If from this humble line of ancestry Dr Beattie derived no lustre, it may be fairly said, that he incurred no disgrace. For though they were poor, they were honest; and were even distinguished in that neighbourhood for their superior understanding. His father, in particular, is represented as having been a man of a most respectable character, who, by reading, had acquired knowledge superior to what could have been expected in his humble condition.

After his father's death, his mother, who was a woman of uncommon abilities, was assisted in the management of their small farm by her eldest son David; by the profits of which, and of the retail shop in the village, she was enabled to bring up her family in a comfortable manner. Her son James she placed at the parish school of Lawrencekirk.

To that part of the civil polity of Scotland, by which in every parish a public school is by law established, it has been, not unjustly, attributed, that the lower classes of people in Scotland often display a superior degree of abilities through common life, to those of the same station in other countries, among whom the blindest ignorance but too frequently prevails. For in these parochial schools the youth, even of the peasantry, may, if so inclined, receive such a measure of instruction, as is suited to their station, or may enable them, if possessed of superior genius, to arrive at still higher attainments in literature.

The parish school of Lawrencekirk was at that time of some reputation; and it was rendered the more remarkable, by being the same in which Ruddiman, the celebrated grammarian, had taught about forty years before. When young Beattie attended it, this school was taught by a person of the name of Milne, whom he used to represent as a good grammarian, and tolerably skilled in the Latin language, but destitute of taste, as well as of some other qualifications essential to a good teacher.

During the period of his attendance at the parish-school, he had access to few books.* Such as he could procure, he read with avidity, and it was then that he chanced to meet with Ogilby's translation of Virgil, from which he learned "the tale of Troy "divine," and first became acquainted with English versification.† Even at that early period, his turn for poetry began to show itself, and among his school-fellows he went by the name of *the Poet*. It was remarked, likewise by his family at home, particularly by a sister some years older than himself, at whose house in Montrose, after her marriage, he occasionally visited,‡ that, during the night-time, he used to get out of bed, and walk about his chamber, in order to write down any poetical thought that had struck his fancy.

In the year 1749, he commenced his academical course, and attended the Greek class in Marischal College, Aberdeen, at that time taught by Dr Blackwell.§ Of Dr Blackwell's friendship to him, he retained through life the most grateful remembrance, frequently declaring that the learned Principal was the first person who gave him reason to believe that he was possessed of any genius. By Dr Blackwell, he was, to his astonishment, early distinguished as superior to all his classfellows; and at the close of the session

* For such books as he read at this early period, he was almost solely indebted to the Rev. Mr Thomson, at that time minister of Lawrencekirk; a very learned man, whose collection, though in all probability it was not large, yet was superior to what a minister of the church of Scotland can generally be supposed to possess in a country parish. Of that clergyman, Dr Beattie always spoke with the highest respect, and acknowledged in a particular manner his obligations to him for the use of books.

† It is a curious co-incidence of circumstances, that Pope was initiated in poetry at eight years of age by the perusal of Ogilby's Homer. A friend having presented Dr Beattie, in the latter part of his life, with a copy of Ogilby's Virgil, made him very happy, in thus recalling to his imagination all the ideas with which his favourite author had at first inspired him, even through the medium of a translation.

‡ Mrs Valentine, who told this anecdote to Mr Arbuthnot, from whom I had it.

§ Dr Thomas Blackwell, Principal of Marischal College, and Professor of Greek, in which language he was eminently skilled; author of an "En-"quiry into the Life and Writings of Homer;" "Letters concerning My-"thology;" and "Memoirs of the Court of Augustus."

1749-50, he received from him a book, elegantly bound, bearing the following inscription: "Jacobo Beattie, in prima classe, "ex comitatu Mernensi,* post examen publicum librum hunc "ἀριστεῖον, præmium dedit T. Blackwell, Aprilis 3° MDCCL."

As his finances were but slender, he became a candidate for one of the bursaries, which are annually bestowed on such of the students as are unable to bear the pecuniary expences attendant on a university education. These bursaries are small annual stipends, which the piety of our ancestors, and their zeal for the advancement of learning, had led them to establish.

But no opprobrious distinction, no menial office, no degrading servitude, is annexed to the appellation of Bursar at Aberdeen, which merely implies the receipt of a certain revenue. On the contrary, it is a proof of superior merit. For, instead of being a sinecure into which the student is inducted without formality, it is the reward of learning, after a competition displayed by those who are the candidates, and of whose literary merits the professors of the university are the Judges. And it not unfrequently happens, as was the case of young Beattie, that the Bursars, by being the best scholars, are found at the head of their class.†

He continued his attendance at the university of Aberdeen during four years, in the course of which, besides attending the Greek class,‡ he studied philosophy under the late Dr Gerard; and during three sessions he attended the lectures given by Dr Pollock, at that time professor of divinity, in Marischal College, no doubt with a view to the ministry; a pursuit, however, which he soon relinquished. One of his fellow-students has informed me, that during their attendance at the divinity hall, he heard Beattie de-

* "The Mearns," to which Dr Blackwell has here given a Latin termination, is the vernacular name for the county of Kincardine.

† This alludes to those Bursaries which are in the gift of the university, and are publicly contended for by every candidate who chuses to make his appearance. Besides these there are several in the gift of private patrons, who bestow them, without trial, on whom they please.

‡ As a proof of the ardour with which he prosecuted his studies, not only while he attended the regular course of instruction at the university, but even after he had ceased to be an academical student, he wrote a book of notes on the Iliad, which has been found among his papers since his death. It con-

liver a discourse, which met with much commendation, but of which it was remarked by the audience, that he spoke poetry in prose.*

Having finished his course of study at the university, he was appointed, on the 1st day of August 1758, to be schoolmaster of the parish of Fordoun, a small hamlet, distant about six miles from his native village of Lawrencekirk, at the foot of the Grampian mountains, where he also filled the office of precentor or parish-clerk.

sists of one hundred and forty duodecimo pages, closely written.† There was also found among his papers, a book of notes on some of the Italian classics, similar to those on Homer. In his library is an interleaved copy of Xenophon's Memorabilia of Socrates, divided into two volumes, with very copious notes in the same manner, most accurately written in a fair hand on the interleaved pages. Longinus on the Sublime is prepared for the same purpose, but no notes are written. In his copy of Virgil in Usum Delphini there are a few notes written by him, but they are not very numerous, nor longer than can be easily contained in the blank spaces of the book itself. Yet they are sometimes not unimportant; for example, Æneid. VI. v. 488. he has corrected the interpretation of the editor Ruæus, who has totally misunderstood the meaning of the expression *et conferre gradum*, which that editor renders *et admovere pedem propius*. On that passage, by a note in Dr Beattie's handwriting, we are referred to Georg. III. v. 169. where the same expression is used, when Virgil is giving directions how to teach heifers to walk side by side to fit them for the plough. There Ruæus himself could not mistake the meaning of the expression (for the same words are used) and renders it as it ought to have been in Æneid. VI. by *simul incedere*. From his corrections of the text of this his favourite Latin poet, as well as by what he has been heard to say, he seems to have preferred the readings of Nicholas Heinsius. In his library are several beautiful copies of Virgil.†

* It is told in the same manner of Thomson, who had also been a student of divinity, that when he produced, as a probationary exercise, the explanation of a psalm, the professor reproved him for speaking a language that would be altogether unintelligible to a popular audience; which so disgusted Thomson with theological pursuits, that he resolved to betake himself entirely to the cultivation of his poetical talents, by which he afterwards rose to such distinguished eminence.‡

* Vide Appendix, [A.]

† I owe the substance of this note to his assistant and successor, Mr Glennie.

‡ Dr Anderson's Life of Thomson, in the Poets of Great Britain, Vol. ix. p. 674.

In this obscure situation he must have passed many of his hours in solitude; for except that of Mr Forbes, the parish-minister, who shewed him great kindness, and in whose family he frequently visited, he had scarcely any other society than that of the neighbouring peasantry, from whose conversation he could derive little amusement, and no information. But he had a never failing resource in his own mind, in those meditations which he loved to indulge, amidst the beautiful and sublime scenery of that neighbourhood, which furnished him with endless amusement. At a small distance from the place of his residence, a deep and extensive glen, finely clothed with wood, runs up into the mountains. Thither he frequently repaired, and there several of his earliest pieces were written. From that wild and romantic spot he drew as from the life, some of the finest descriptions, and most beautiful pictures of nature, in his poetical compositions. He has been heard to say, for instance, that the description of the owl, in his charming poem on "Retirement,"

> "Whence the scar'd owl, on pinions grey,
> "Breaks from the rustling boughs,
> "And down the lone vale sails away
> "To more profound repose."*

was drawn after real nature. And the seventeenth stanza of the second book of "the Minstrel," in which he so feelingly describes the spot of which he most approved, for his place of sepulture, is so very exact a picture of the situation of the churchyard of Lawrencekirk, which stands near to his mother's house, and in which is the school-house where he was daily taught, that he must certainly have had it in his view at the time he wrote the following beautiful lines.

> "Let vanity adorn the marble tomb
> "With trophies, rhymes, and scutcheons of renown,
> "In the deep dungeon of some Gothic dome,
> "Where night and desolation ever frown.

* It is curious to compare this stanza with the second of Gray's Elegy in a Country Church Yard, in which the same thought occurs.

"Mine be the breezy hill that skirts the down,
"Where a green grassy turf is all I crave,
"With here and there a violet bestrown,
"Fast by a brook or fountain's murmuring wave;
"And many an evening sun shine sweetly on my grave."*

It was his supreme delight to saunter in the fields the live-long night, contemplating the sky, and marking the aproach of day; and he used to describe with peculiar animation the pleasure he received from the soaring of the lark in a summer morning. A beautiful landscape which he has magnificently described in the twentieth stanza of the first book of "the Minstrel," corresponds exactly with what must have presented itself to his poetical imagination, on those occasions, at the approach of the rising sun, as he would view the grandeur of that scene from the hill in the neighbourhood of his native village. The high hill which rises to the west of Fordoun would, in a misty morning, supply him with one of the images so beautifully described in the twenty-first stanza.

* The wish, that our bones should be laid "in the sepulchre with our "fathers," has been so prevalent in all ages, that it seems to be a sentiment inherent in our nature. No wonder, therefore, that the local scenery where his nearest and dearest connexions were interred, should have made an early and deep impression on the mind of young Beattie, and should have suggested to him the idea, that *there*, perhaps, might be his own place of sepulture.

At a later period, however, he had changed his design in that respect; and after he began to spend so much of his time at Peterhead, he became fond of an ancient burying-ground, at six miles distance, where had originally stood the church, now in ruins, of the parish of St Fergus, in the middle of the beautiful links* of that name. This was a favourite spot of Dr Beattie's, where he much delighted to take his walks of meditation. Combining the idea of solitude and repose with the solemn purpose to which the scene was devoted, he felt a more than common interest in that sequestered spot, and used to say to his friends, that it was there he wished his remains might be laid. With that view, the first season in which his niece, Mrs Glennie, accompanied him to Peterhead, he carried her to visit the church-yard in the links of St Fergus.

It was the recollection of that circumstance which induced Mrs Glennie to ask him, after the death of both his sons, where he desired to be interred? to which he replied, that "he would wish his body to be laid beside those of "his two sons, rather than beside that of the greatest monarch upon earth." He was accordingly buried at Aberdeen.

* A word used in Scotland, nearly synonymous with what in England they call "Downs."

And the twentieth stanza of the second book of "the Minstrel" describes a night-scene unquestionably drawn from nature, in which he probably had in view Homer's sublime description of the moon, in the eighth book of the Iliad, so admirably translated by Pope, that an eminent critic has not scrupled to declare it to be superior to the original.* He used, himself, to tell, that it was from the top of a high hill in the neighbourhood that he first beheld the ocean, the sight of which, he declared, made the most lively impression on his mind.

It is pleasing, I think, to contemplate these his early habits, so congenial to the feelings of a poetical and warm imagination; and, therefore, I trust I shall be forgiven for having dwelt on them so long.†

From this cheerless want of society, however, he was, not long after, in a great degree relieved, by the arrival of his eldest brother, David, who came to establish himself in the village of Fordoun. Although he was eleven years older than our author, the utmost cordiality subsisted between the two brothers, and much of their time was spent in each other's company. At that time David, who was so much older than his brother, no doubt had it in his power to do him considerable service. But that service was amply returned in the course of their after lives, by Dr Beattie, who took every opportunity of assisting his brother and his family. And finally, by his will, he left to David a legacy, from which, however, by his dying before Dr Beattie, he did not derive any benefit.

* Melmoth's Letters of Sir Thomas Fitzosborn, letter xx. p. 85.

† It must have been about this period, that an incident happened to him, which I should be afraid to relate, were I not fully persuaded of its authenticity; I never, indeed, myself heard him mention it; but I have perfect confidence in the veracity of those friends to whom he has frequently told the circumstance. Having lain down, early in the morning, on the bank of his favourite rivulet adjoining to his mother's house, he had fallen asleep; on awaking, it was not without astonishment, that he found he had been walking in his sleep, and that he was then at a considerable distance (about a mile and a half) from the place where he had lain down. On his way back to that spot, he passed some labourers, and enquiring of them, if they had seen him walking along, they told him that they had, with his head hanging down, as if he had been looking for something he had lost.*

* Vide Appendix, [B.]

His first patron was the late Lord Gardenstown,* who, being at that time sheriff of the county of Kincardine, resided occasionally at Woodstock, a house in the neighbourhood of Fourdoun. To Beattie Mr Garden became accidentally known, by his having found him one day in his favourite glen, employed in writing with a pencil. On enquiring what he was about, and finding that he was employed in the composition of a poem, Mr Garden's curiosity was attracted, and from that period he took the young bard under his protection. Dr Beattie has been frequently heard to mention an anecdote which took place in the early part of his acquaintance with that gentleman. Mr Garden, having seen some of his pieces in manuscript, and entertaining some doubt of their being entirely of his own composition, in order to satisfy himself of the abilities of the young poet, asked him, with politeness, to translate the invocation to Venus from the first book of Lucretius. In compliance with this request, Beattie retired into the adjoining wood, and in no long time produced the translation, bearing all the marks of original composition, for it was much blotted with alterations and corrections. It was printed in the first collection of Dr Beattie's poems in the year 1760, but omitted in all the subsequent editions.

He also became known at this time to Lord Monboddo,† (whose family-seat is in the parish of Fordoun,) with whom he always maintained a friendly intercourse, although they essentially differed in some very material points, as must be very apparent to those who are conversant with their writings.

* Francis Garden, afterwards one of the judges of the supreme courts of civil and criminal law in Scotland, by the title of Lord Gardenstown, the same who is mentioned in the note on p. 9, as the patron of the village of Lawrencekirk, which was on his estate.

† James Burnet of Monboddo, also one of the judges of the supreme court of law in Scotland, by the title of Lord Monboddo, well known in the literary world by his publications on the origin and progress of language, and a still more extensive work, entitled, "Ancient Metaphysics," in which he has indulged himself in not a few paradoxical and fanciful theories. His writings, however, evince him to have been a man of learning and talents, though credulous in the extreme. He died at Edinburgh, May 26, 1799, aged 85. The beautiful "Elegy written in the year 1758," beginning "Still shall unthinking man substantial deem," was written by Dr Beattie, on the death of Mrs Walker, sister of Lord Monboddo.

He continued to teach the school of Fordoun till the year 1757, when, on a vacancy happening of the place of usher in the grammar-school of Aberdeen, his friend, Mr Forbes, minister of Fordoun, advised him to become a candidate for it. He accordingly offered himself, but did not succeed. He acquitted himself, however, so well in his examination on that occasion, that, on a second vacancy of the same place happening about a year afterwards, the magistrates, who are the electors, requested him to accept of the office without any further trial; and he was accordingly elected to it, 20th June 1758, soon after which period he left Fordoun, and removed to Aberdeen.

SECTION II.

FROM DR BEATTIE'S ESTABLISHMENT AT ABERDEEN IN THE YEAR 1758, TO THE PUBLICATION OF HIS ESSAY ON TRUTH IN THE YEAR 1770.

THIS event of Beattie's election to be one of the ushers of the grammar-school at Aberdeen, humble as the appointment was for a man of his talents and acquired knowledge, yet forms a memorable epoch in his life. It removed him in fact from the obscurity in which he had hitherto languished, at a distance from books, with few friends, and with but little of the blessings of congenial society, to a large and populous town, the seat of an university, where he had access to public libraries for study, and the opportunity of cultivating the friendship of persons of taste and learning. Principal Blackwell, his early friend, and the first to discover his genius and talents, was now dead. But the two universities of Marischal college, New Aberdeen, and King's college, Old Aberdeen, could boast of no inconsiderable number of men of genius and learning, with whom he had soon the happiness of becoming more immediately connected. And there were likewise several gentlemen at that time at Aberdeen, though not of the class of literary men by profession, yet of liberal education and a competent degree of general knowledge, well suited to the taste of such a person as Beattie, who delighted to associate in convivial meetings, with friends whose disposition and habits were congenial with his own.

He did not remain long, however, in the humble situation of usher of the grammar-school. In the year 1760, a chair in the Marischal college and university of Aberdeen, became vacant by the death of Dr Duncan, professor of natural philosophy. On Beattie's relating this event, merely as an occurrence of the day, to a gentleman with whom he lived in much intimacy, his friend suggested to him the idea of his endeavouring to procure the vacant

appointment for himself. Beattie heard the proposal with amazement, conceiving such a situation to be an object altogether beyond his grasp. And, indeed, few things seemed less likely to take place, than that he who but two years ago had filled the obscure office of a country parochial school-master, almost friendless and unknown, should succeed in obtaining a professor's chair in the gift of the crown. His friend,* however, willing to try what could

* The gentleman, to whose active zeal and friendly interposition, on this occasion, Beattie owed so much, was Robert Arbuthnot, esq. secretary to the Board of Trustees for fisheries and manufactures at Edinburgh, but who, at that time, resided chiefly, and carried on business as a merchant, at Peterhead in Aberdeenshire. Beattie and he had become acquainted on the removal of the former to Aberdeen; and a friendship was soon formed between them, which terminated only with their lives. Mr Arbuthnot, who was nearly related to the celebrated Dr Arbuthnot, the friend of Pope and Swift, to a considerable share of classical learning, added an intimate acquaintance with the best authors in the English language, particularly in poetry and belles lettres, of whom he well knew how to appreciate the respective merits, and with the most favourite passages of whose works his memory was stored beyond that of almost any man I ever knew. He had likewise read the most esteemed writers in the French and Italian languages. By these means his conversation was uncommonly entertaining and instructive. He possessed, likewise, an inexhaustible flow of spirits, which had helped to support him through a variety of distressful circumstances, to which it had been his lot to be exposed. And to all this he added a vein of delicate and peculiar humour, and "flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table in a roar."

An intimate friendship between Mr Arbuthnot and the author of these Memoirs had commenced at an earlier period than that at which either of us knew Dr Beattie, whom we both equally loved as a friend, and admired as a writer of very superior genius. We had the happiness, too, of possessing in Major Mercer, of whom I shall have occasion to say more hereafter, another early friend, who was equally attached to Dr Beattie by long habits of the strictest intimacy. Of the Doctor's regard for all the three, he has given the strongest proof; first, by inscribing to us the collection which he printed of his son's miscellanies, and at last by appointing us the executors of his will, and the trustees of his property; bequeathing to each, at the same time, some memorial of his kind remembrance, with very flattering expressions of esteem.* From those gentlemen, therefore, so intimately acquainted with Dr Beattie, and in whose taste and judgment on literary subjects I had the fullest confidence, I trusted that I should have received the most essential aid, in preparing, by our united efforts, this tribute of affection to the memory of our much loved friend. But,

* Vide Dr Beattie's will, Appendix, [C.]

be done, prevailed on the late Earl of Erroll (father of the present lord,) with whom he lived in much intimacy, to apply, by means of Lord Milton, to the late duke of Argyll, who at that time was supposed to have the chief interest in the disposal of such offices as became vacant in Scotland; and, fortunately for Beattie, Lord Erroll received a favourable answer. In consequence of which, on the 8th of October 1760, he was installed professor of moral philosophy and logic in Marischal college.

Dr Duncan,* whose death thus made way for Dr Beattie's appointment, was Professor of Natural Philosophy. But the professorship of Moral Philosophy and Logic becoming vacant soon afterwards by the resignation of Dr Gerard, on his being appointed Professor of Divinity, Dr Skene, who was also a candidate for one of these offices, and Dr Beattie, agreed, that the professorship of Moral Philosophy should be assigned to the last, as more suitable to his taste and disposition; and that of Natural Philosophy to Dr Skene. They were both installed on the same day.†

By this honourable appointment, Dr Beattie found himself raised to a situation of much respectability, where he could give full scope to his talents, and indulge his favourite propensity of

" On our firmest resolutions
" The silent and inaudible tread of Death
" Steals like a thief."

Major Mercer and Mr Arbuthnot survived Dr Beattie only a very short space of time; and the health of both had become so much impaired, as to render it impossible for either to give me any assistance. A misfortune which I feel, as I proceed, almost in every page. Mr Arbuthnot died 5th of November 1803, and Major Mercer, 18th November 1804.

* The translator of " Cicero's Orations."

† As an expression of his gratitude to Lord Erroll for this most important service, he dedicated to that nobleman his first publication of a volume of poems. And when his eldest son was born, he named him James Hey Beattie, after the Christian name and surname of his noble patron, for whom he ever after entertained the highest respect. Lord Erroll, on his part, constantly treated Dr Beattie with the most friendly regard; so that he was always a welcome guest at Slains-Castle, the seat of Lord Erroll, in Aberdeenshire. For some farther account of this accomplished nobleman, vide Appendix, [D].

John Gregory,* on a more extensive plan, for the discussion of literary and philosophical subjects. The original members were Dr Read, Dr Gregory, Dr David Skene, a physician of genius and taste, particularly skilful in botany; the Reverend Dr Robert Trail, nephew of the bishop of Down and Connor; and Dr Stewart, professor of mathematics, in Marischal college. To these were afterwards added, Dr Gerard,† Dr George Skene, physician and professor of

losophical and metaphysical writers of our age. He left Aberdeen not long after Dr Beattie was settled there. But the friendship which they had early contracted for each other continued unabated to the close of their lives. For farther particulars of Dr Reid, who died in the year 1796, in his 87th year, see an elegant and well written account of his life by my friend Professor Dugald Stewart of Edinburgh.

* Dr John Gregory, at that time professor of medicine in the university of Aberdeen, with whom Dr Beattie became early acquainted; and a friendship was formed between them, of the sincerest and most intimate nature, which lasted unimpaired to the death of Dr Gregory. Not long after the period here spoken of, he removed to Edinburgh, from a consciousness of his own talents, which he justly deemed calculated for a more extensive sphere than that wherein he was placed at Aberdeen. In Edinburgh he soon obtained a chair in that celebrated school of medicine, was honoured with the office of first physician to his majesty for Scotland, and speedily arrived at high eminence in the practice of his profession. His publications of "A comparative View of the State and Faculties of Man, with those of the Animal World," of his "Lectures on the Duties and Offices of a Physician," and his beautiful little address to his daughters, published after his death by the title of "A Father's Legacy," show, in a most conspicuous point of view, the goodness of his heart as a man, and his merit as a philosopher. He possessed an elegant taste, and an intimate acquaintance with the world. He was, moreover, a person of much piety, and a Christian in the best sense of the word. Of manners uncommonly gentle and engaging, his society was courted by persons of the first distinction, and he lived in intimacy with the most eminent literary characters of his time, both in England and Scotland. He honoured me very early, and in a particular degree, with his friendship, of which he gave the most unequivocal proof, by naming me one of the guardians of his children. And I now look back, with a melancholy satisfaction, to the many pleasing and instructive hours I have spent in his company. For a more particular account of Dr Gregory, who died 9th February 1773, see his life, written by Lord Woodhouselee, prefixed to his works.

† The Reverend Dr Alexander Gerard, professor of divinity, first in Marischal College, New Aberdeen, afterwards in King's College, Old Aberdeen, was another of that set of learned and philosophical friends, from

natural philosophy in the same university; the Reverend Mr John Farquhar,* and Dr Beattie. This literary society, (or rather club, for it was a convivial meeting in a tavern,) which the vulgar and uninformed denominated the *Wise Club*, subsisted for several years, and seems to have had the happiest effects in awakening and directing that spirit of philosophical research, which has reflected so much lustre on the north of Scotland. The members (says the elegant author of the life of Dr Gregory,) were persons of distinguished abilities and learning, attached to the same plan, and engaged in similar pursuits. The animosities and the mean jealousies, which so often disgrace the characters of literary men, were unknown to those friends, who, educated in one school, professing no opposite tenets, or contending principles, seem to have united themselves as in one common cause, the defence of virtue, of religion, and of truth.

It would be curious, in many instances (continues the author whom I quote,) to trace the history of those literary compositions, which have instructed or amused the world, and to mark their progress from their first rude sketches to their complete form and ultimate perfection. Some of the most admired works of those philosophers I have mentioned, owed their origin to this literary society, which was held once a fortnight in Aberdeen, on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. The members met at five o'clock in the evening (for in those days at Aberdeen, it was the custom to dine early,) when one of the members, as president, took the chair, and left it at half an hour after eight, when they partook of a slight and unexpensive collation, and at ten o'clock they separated.†

whose writings those two universities have justly derived so great celebrity. He was distinguished by his publications, viz. "An Essay on Taste," to which was adjudged the gold prize-medal by the philosophical society of Edinburgh; "Dissertations on the Genius and Evidences of Christianity;" "An Essay on Genius;" and two volumes of sermons. Dr Beattie and he were constant and intimate friends from their first acquaintance. He died 22d February 1795.

* Author of two volumes of excellent sermons, published after his death, by his two friends, Dr Campbell and Dr Gerard. He was brother to sir Walter Farquhar, bart. physician in London.

† Rules of the Philosophical Society of Aberdeen, MS.

At these meetings, a part of the evening's entertainment was the reading a short essay, composed by one of the members in his turn. Besides those more formal compositions, thus read as discourses, a literary or philosophical question was proposed each night, for the subject of conversation at the subsequent meeting. And it was the duty of the proposer of the question to open the discussion; by him also the opinions of the members who took a part in it, were digested into the form of an essay, which was ingrossed in the *album* of the society.

Of such an institution the advantages were obvious and eminent. Besides the benefit to be derived to the members from a mutual communication of their sentiments on the common objects of their pursuit, an opportunity was afforded of subjecting their intended publications to the test of friendly criticism. And the many valuable works which issued nearly about the same time from individuals connected with this institution, more particularly the writings of Reid, Campbell, Beattie, Gregory, and Gerard, furnish the best panegyric on the enlightened views of those under whose direction it was originally planned, and by whose exertions it was so successfully carried on.*

But it was not solely to ethics, metaphysics, and logic, that Dr Beattie had devoted his time and attention at this period. For it appears by the following letter, that he relaxed his mind from those severer studies, by a perusal of works of imagination, by which he prepared himself for the composition of those admirable essays on poetry, and other subjects of taste, which he afterwards gave to the world.

* See Appendix, [F.]

LETTER I.

DR BEATTIE TO DR JOHN OGILVIE.*

Aberdeen, 20th August, 1759.

I HAD intended to have written a long letter on the occasion of my reading "Clarissa;" and I actually had begun one in a very methodical manner; but happening to read the postscript † afterwards, I was surprised to find the very subject touched upon there, which I had proposed to treat of in my intended letter. I therefore changed my first resolution, judging it unnecessary to trouble you with reading in my words what you find much better expressed in that postscript. I intended to have inquired into the conveniencies and disadvantages of Richardson's manner of writing, compared with that of other novelists: to have considered the propriety or impropriety of the catastrophe; and to have indulged what other critical reflections might have occurred upon the arrangement of the narrations, the length of the work, and a few other particulars. But finding this plan executed, as I said before, in the postscript, and executed in a manner very similar to that which I had designed, I shall trouble you at present only with a few miscellaneous observations upon that celebrated novel.

"The author shows great knowledge of mankind, and of human nature. He possesses an inexhaustible fund of original sentiment, a happy talent at some kinds of description, particularly conversation pieces; he delineates some characters with masterly and distinguishing strokes; he seems to be well acquainted with the human heart, and with the particular emotions that arise in it on particular occasions. The fervour wherewith he recommends religion and virtue intimates, that he is truly in earnest, and that his heart goes along with his pen.

* The Reverend Dr John Ogilvie, minister at Midmar in Aberdeenshire, author of "*Providence*," and other poems of very considerable merit, especially his earlier lyric compositions. He also published "An Enquiry into "the Causes of the Infidelity and Scepticism of the Times," a book containing much valuable matter.

† To "Clarissa," referred to in the preface of the work, in which several objections are considered by the author.

"On reading "Clarissa," we immediately discover that its design is more to instruct than to amuse. The author warns the reader of this in his preface, and again repeats it in the postscript. It is for this reason that they who read more for amusement than instruction will not be so much captivated with "Clarissa" as with some other of our English novels. I grant there are in the novel before us a great many passages of the most interesting kind, but these passages are few in comparison to the extent of the work. I cannot help thinking that our author is often tedious to a fault. In the first volumes there are, if I mistake not, many needless (and I had almost said nauseating) repetitions. I grant, such letters as fall under this censure are generally characteristical, are often humorous, often instructive, and might possibly please, if we were to read the book a second or third time, when we are acquainted with all the characters, and all the particulars of the story. But as there are not many readers who can afford leisure to read so long a romance twice or thrice over, I presume proper care ought to have been taken to blend amusement and instruction in such a manner, as that the one might be a heightening and seasoning to the other. When a stop is put to the progress of the story, in order to give the author room to shew his talent for humour, or for moralizing, the readers (especially those of the younger sort, for whom principally such books are intended) will be impatient till they disentangle themselves of these digressions, and fall in again with the story. This, I believe, will generally be the case if the narrative be deeply interesting; and deeply interesting every narrative of this kind ought to be. One of the rules to be observed in the Aristotelean drama, is, that there be no scene in the piece superfluous. I wish the author of "Clarissa" had kept some such rule as this in his eye; that he had disposed all the parts of his work in such a manner, as that the reader, though always impatient for the catastrophe, should never be tempted to pass over any part, but should ever find the story rising upon him, so as that his passion for novelty should be fully gratified all along. For my own part, I was often chagrined at his tediousness, and frequently was obliged to turn to the contents of the volume, to relieve my mind a little from the rack of unsatisfied impatience; yet I doubt not, if I were now to read "Clarissa" a second time, I should find these tedious parts not the least useful. Whoever rails at Mr Richard-

son's tediousness should recollect, that his design is more to instruct than to amuse; and that consequently his tediousness is a pardonable fault, as the motive to it is so laudable.

"With respect to the characters in "Clarissa," they are, I think, in general, particular and distinct enough. There is something similar in the characters of the three brothers, Harlowes, and at the same time something peculiar in each. The same thing may be observed, upon a comparison of others of the characters that are apparently pretty much alike. The character of Lovelace is wrought up with great art. In the first volume the reader sees something amiable enough in this character, sees what he thinks almost sufficient to engage the affections of Clarissa; nor does he discover the deep designing ruffian, till the third volume; and yet so consistent are Lovelace's designs, even then, with that character which he bears at the beginning, that the reader is not disappointed when he comes to trace out his villany.

"It is with some a very strong objection against our author, that he proposes to our imitation, what they call a perfect character in the person of Clarissa. Clarissa's character is indeed exalted, but it is not *humanly* perfect. And in proposing a character something more than humanly perfect to our imitation, I cannot at present discern any absurdity. For is it not recommended to those who study to excel in any art or science, that they form themselves after the most perfect models, even although it be morally impossible for them ever to attain the perfection of these models? Does not the celebrated judge of the sublime very strongly recommend this rule, when he proposes for the imitation of those who would attempt epic poetry and oratory, no less perfect patterns than Homer and Demosthenes? Nay, (if we may without profanation, use this other illustration) does not the scripture enjoin us to imitate the great Original of all perfection? This rule is founded in nature and reason. If the model be imperfect, the copies must of consequence be more imperfect; and so liable to error is the human mind, that we are as prone to imitate the faults as the excellencies of what is proposed for an original to us. Now, shall this rule be allowed to every other science, and not to the most important of all sciences, the science of life and manners? I know the grand objection is, that to give a man or woman a perfect character

is out of nature. A character absolutely perfect does not, we acknowledge, belong to man.

"But what height of excellence even a human soul may arrive at, we cannot ascertain, till we have left no experiment untried. One, who had never seen the tricks of a wire dancer, would be apt to ridicule as fabulous the first accounts he should hear of those astonishing feats, of which long application and unwearied industry make these performers capable. Who can tell, what happy, what glorious effects might be produced, were an equal proportion of industry applied to the regulation of the passions, and the strengthening and improving the reasonable powers! Let not then the novelist be censured, if his hero or heroine be possessed of a proportion of virtue superior to what we have discovered in our acquaintance with mankind; provided the natural genius inherent in the hero or heroine, assisted by the improvements of the happiest education, be sufficient to render their virtues at least probable. Nature, we must remember, had endowed Clarissa with a genius of the most exalted kind, and a temperament of soul formed to receive the impressions of virtue. This genius, and this disposition, improved by the culture of a liberal and strictly virtuous education, amid the simplicity of a country life, could not fail to produce an admirable character. Nor do I think this character (all circumstances considered) stretched beyond the limits of humanity. Clarissa's external conduct was indeed unblameable (and I hope, for the honour of mankind, there are many to be found whose external conduct is unblameable), but she often acknowledges her heart was not so. She owns she was conceited and puffed up in her happy days, and not entirely proof against the suggestions of chagrin and despondency in her adversity. If, then, her character be perfect, we must call it (as we before called it) *humanly* perfect.

"On the whole, I think Mr Richardson is, with regard to the manners of his heroine, entirely unworthy of blame.

"You ask, What I think of Richardson's talents for the pathetic? In this respect, I think he has no equals among his own tribe of writers, and not many superiors even among the most celebrated tragedians. I said before, that he seems to be acquainted with the particular emotions that arise in the human heart on particular occasions. Several passages of his work I could point out in proof

of this: I shall only at present give one instance, and that is, Clarissa's delirious letter to Lovelace (vol. v. p. 309.) which no person can read without sensible emotion. The starts of phrenzy, of phrenzy in such a person, under such circumstances, are, I think, hit off in such a manner, as would not have been unworthy of Shakespeare himself. I shall transcribe a few lines from that letter, with which I cannot tell how much I was struck. "But good, "now, Lovelace, don't set Mrs Sinclair upon me again. I never "did her any harm. She so affrights me when I see her. Ever "since—*When was it? I cannot tell.* You can, I suppose." This *(When was it?)* suggests a great deal to my imagination. It is one of those soul-harrowing expressions which are seldom to be met with but in Shakespeare, and which are infinitely preferable to all the laboured harangues and verbose descriptions of a Dryden. I must add, that the full beauty of that phrase cannot be taken in but by one, who is well acquainted with this part of the story. The descriptions of the arrest, and of Clarissa's death, are very pathetic: and the author shows, by his account of the infamous Sinclair's fate, that he has no mean talent at describing scenes of horror. There is something dreadfully striking in the penknife scene, as it is called (vol. vi. p. 60.) But as it is needless to be more particular, I cannot dismiss this criticism, without taking notice, that however pathetic the account of the lady's misfortunes may be, *sorrow* will not (I think) be the prevailing passion in one who peruses it. If I mistake not, *indignation* at the infernal villany of the ruffian, who is the author of these misfortunes, will not a little contribute to steel the heart against the softer impressions of sorrow, at least will render them less penetrating. And yet, perhaps, either of these passions may be prevalent, according to the constitution of the reader.

"Richardson, I think, merits commendation for his carefully avoiding to hint the least anticipation of the catastrophe, in the first volumes. The reader is left as much in the dark, with respect to events, as the interested persons themselves. This naturally results from the manner of writing which our author has chosen, and is no doubt one of the principal excellencies of his manner, compared with that of other novelists. But this matter is handled in the postscript to the work.

"I shall have done with my criticism on "Clarissa." To point out faults is a disagreeable task; I choose rather to insist upon beauties. Richardson, upon the whole, is an original writer; and deserves well of his country, for giving it one of the most *useful* novels in the English language.

"After allowing this writer so large a share of merit, perhaps it may be thought too trifling to censure his style. It is, indeed, sometimes very expressive. To have raised it above the familiar, had been faulty. He has often coined words, which, in a literary correspondence, is allowable. He varies his style with great judgment, and adapts it admirably to the different characters. If I were to find fault with it at all, I would only say, that, from an over-affectation of the familiar, he too often uses the parenthesis; and as he seldom unites the latter part of the period with the former, by a *recapitulating word* or two, he lays his reader under the necessity, especially where the parenthesis is long, of reading the sentence once and again, before he can catch the meaning and intent of the whole. I think the parenthesis ought to be used very sparingly; and when an author chooses to use it, he should condescend so far to the weakness of his reader's memory, as to unite the disjoined parts of the period by a few recapitulating words, as I venture to call them, prefixed to the latter clause.

"I was surprised to find, at the end of such a work as "The "History of Clarissa," a set of verses so very paltry as those inscribed to the author of "Clarissa." But I believe authors are on such occasions often at a loss, and find themselves obliged to prefer, not the quality of the complimentary verses, but the quality of the friendly rhymers themselves; otherwise I should venture to pronounce Mr Richardson an inadequate judge of poetical merit. Take the following four lines, and tell me if you have ever seen more prosaic doggerel?

"With streaming eyes, too late, the mother blames
"Her tame submission to the tyrant, James;
"Even he, the gloomy father, o'er the hearse
"Laments his rashness, and recals his curse."*

* It is pleasing to compare this criticism of Dr Beattie's, on Richardson's "Clarissa," written when a very young man, in a private letter to a friend, with that which he afterwards gave to the world, at the distance of four and

Dr Beattie, as has been already mentioned, had given early indications of poetical genius. This, however, he had merely employed for the amusement of himself and his friends. He had indeed occasionally sent some verses to the Scots Magazine, published at Edinburgh.* But his first appearance in print, in his own character, was by the publication, in London, in the year 1760, of a small collection, entitled, "Original Poems and Translations," to which he prefixed his name, and dedicated it to the Earl of Erroll, in testimony of gratitude to that nobleman, to whom he was indebted for his chair in the university†.

twenty years, in his "Dissertation on Fable and Romance;"* whence it will be seen how accurately he had formed his opinion on the subject, at so early a period of life.

* In the Scots Magazine for the year 1756, p. 391, will be found a poem written by Dr Beattie, on reading the declaration of war, signed "*J. B. Kincardineshire, 7th June*, 1756." In the same Magazine, for the year 1757, p. 258, there is an epitaph with the following words prefixed, *designed for its author*, which was signed *Morituus, K—d—esb—e*, evidently Kincardineshire, like the former, which was certainly written by him; as the epitaph in the first edition of his Poems, p. 66. contains nearly the same thought, and the last stanza verbatim. In the Scots Magazine for 1758, p. 482, is the "*Ode to Peace*," signed *Aberdeen, J. B.* In the Scots Magazine, 1759, p. 134, is the "Elegy on the death of Mrs. Walker," signed *J. B. Aberdeen, Feb.* 1759. In the same year, page 303, is the "*Epitaph for a Messenger*," *written and published at the particular desire of the person for whom it was intended.* It is signed, *Mont. Abd. Ford. June* 28, 1759. The contracted words are for *Montrose, Aberdeen, Fordoun.*

† The contents of this small volume were;
" Ode to Peace.
" Retirement, an Ode.
" Ode to Hope.
" The Triumph of Melancholy.
" An Elegy occasioned by the Death of a Lady.
" The Hares, a Fable.
‡" Epitaph.
‡" Epitaph on Two Brothers.
" Elegy.
‡" Song in imitation of Shakespeare.
‡" Anacreon, Ode 22. translated.
‡" Invocation to Venus from Lucretius, translated.

* Dissert. on Fable and Romance, p. 567.

This collection was very favourably received, and stamped Dr Beattie with the character of a poet of great and original genius. The public judgment in his favour must be considered, too, as the more valuable, and indeed cannot by any means be suspected of partiality, when it is considered, that the poems were presented to the world without any patronage, and with nothing but their own intrinsic merit to recommend them: for the name of the author had never been so much as heard of in London previous to their publication. The harmony of his numbers, however, the simplicity, yet force and elegance of his diction, the brightness of his fancy, as well as the correct and appropriate sentiments throughout, were of themselves sufficient to command the applause of every competent judge.

Of the pieces in this collection, all are certainly not of equal merit. While the odes to "Peace," to "Hope," on "Retirement," breathe the true spirit of lyric poetry, and some of the elegiac poems are highly pathetic and affecting, fable seems to be a species of composition for which he had but little genius. It may therefore probably excite some wonder, that while, in the subsequent editions of his poems he chose to retain the "Hares," a poem which seems to possess little other merit than smooth versification and a faultless moral, he should have omitted his beautiful "Ode to Peace," and the "Triumph of Melancholy." The concluding dozen lines of the "Hares," indeed, present a beautiful and glowing picture of "Evening," and as such are deserving of no ordinary commendation*.

In this respect, however, Dr Beattie is not the first poet, who has entertained a judgment of his own works, different from that which was held of them by the public. It is known, that Milton

‡" Horace, Book II. Ode 10. translated.
‡" Horace, Book III. Ode 13. translated.
‡" The Ten Pastorals of Virgil, translated.

Those pieces marked ‡, were never reprinted; and the "Ode to Peace," as well as the "Triumph of Melancholy," were omitted out of his later editions.

* The concluding lines of the "Hares" seem to me to possess beauty sufficient to entitle them to preservation. I have therefore ventured to place them in the appendix, [F.]

preferred the "Paradise Regained" to his divine poem of "Para-" dise Lost." Virgil is recorded to have ordered, on his death-bed, that the "Æneid" should be burnt, because he did not think it sufficiently finished for publication; and it is to the disobedience of his executors that we are indebted for the possession of that exquisite performance. Tasso new-modelled and injured his "Gierusalemme Liberata." And it may reasonably be doubted, from the specimen which Akenside has left of the manner in which he intended to alter his "Pleasures of the Imagination," whether that beautiful poem would have been improved by the experiment, had he lived to finish it. With all these authorities before me, I trust I shall stand acquitted of any impropriety, if I rescue from oblivion those two most beautiful poems, the "Ode to Peace," and the "Triumph of Melancholy." Let those who think differently from me, in this respect, only take the trouble carefully to peruse the stanza III. 1. of the "Ode to Peace."—

"Ambition, outside fair! within as foul
"As fiends of fiercest heart below,
"Who ride the hurricanes of fire, that roll
"Their thundering vortex o'er the realms of woe,
"Yon naked waste survey;
"Where late was heard the flute's mellifluous lay;
"Where late the rosy-bosom'd hours
"In loose array danc'd lightly o'er the flow'rs;
"Where late the shepherd told his tender tale;
"And, waken'd by the murmuring breeze of morn,
"The voice of cheerful labour fill'd the dale;
"And dove-eyed Plenty smil'd, and wav'd her liberal horn."*

Or stanza IV. 3. of the same poem,—

"On Cuba's utmost steep,*
"Far leaning o'er the deep,
"The goddess' pensive form was seen,
"Her robe, of nature's varied green,
"Wav'd on the gale; grief dimm'd her radiant eyes,
"Her bosom heav'd with boding sighs."

* This alludes to the discovery of America by the Spaniards under Columbus. Those ravagers are said to have made their first descent on the islands in the Gulf of Florida, of which Cuba is one.—Note of the poet.

"She eyed the main; where gaining on the view,
"Emerging from th' ethereal blue,
"Midst the dread pomp of war,
"Blaz'd the Iberian streamer from afar:
"She saw; and on refulgent pinions borne,
"Slow wing'd her way sublime, and mingled with the morn."

And then let them say, if they think I have done wrong in preserving this fine poem, by placing it in the appendix.* For similar reasons, I have also inserted in the appendix, the "Triumph of Melancholy," wishing that this poem also should not be intirely lost.†

The epitaph, printed at p. 66. of the collection of the year 1760, without any particular address, I have also ventured to place in the appendix; because, from the words prefixed to it in its original form, in the Scots Magazine, which I have already quoted, it seems certainly to have been intended as an epitaph for himself, a circumstance whence it unquestionably derives an additional value.

The beautiful "Epitaph on two Brothers" was written on occasion of a fatal accident which actually took place, when, in crossing the river Southesk, on horseback, in the neighbourhood of Montrose, in the county of Angus, two young men, brothers, of the name of Leitch, were carried down by the stream, and both drowned. Their bodies were afterwards found clasped in each other's arms. In such compositions it was that Dr Beattie eminently excelled. Yet that piece too he has omitted from the later editions of his poems, but I have ventured to place it also in the appendix.‡

Of this collection of Dr Beattie's poetical pieces, the largest share consisted of poetical translations from the classics, and of these the principal were the "Pastorals of Virgil." Speaking of them, he says in his preface, that "Mr Dryden's translation will "be admired as long as the English language is understood, for "that fluent and graceful energy of expression, which distinguishes "all the writings of that poet. In his compositions," continues

* Vide Appendix, [G.]

† Vide Appendix, [H.]

‡ Vide Appendix, [I.]

Beattie, "even in those which have been censured as inaccurate, "we are charmed with

"Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn."

"And if we find any thing blameable, we are inclined to impute it, "not to any defect in his own genius or taste, but to the depravity "of the age in which it was his misfortune to live.

"The translation of Virgil, published some years ago by the "learned and ingenious Mr Joseph Warton," he goes on, "did not "come into my hands till long after what is now offered to the "public was finished. The perusal of these two masterly ver- "sions," he says, "might have effectually discouraged the publi- "cation of the following, had he ever intended it as a rival to "either of the others. But he disclaims that intention, and would "wish only to be thought an humble copier of Virgil. And he "hopes that his translation will be pardoned, if, in a few particular "instances, it be found to have set any of the beauties of the ad- "mired original in a more conspicuous point of view to the Eng- "lish reader."

After a declaration so modest on the part of the author, it would not be fair to scrutinize this translation too severely, more especially as it was never republished after the first edition; yet it is no mean praise, that it may be read with satisfaction even after the translation of Dryden, of which Dr Johnson, in his life of that great poet, speaks with such high commendation:* and whoever shall take the trouble of comparing the translations of Dryden and of Beattie, with the original, will not probably deny, that Beattie comes the nearest to the sense of the author, with, at the same time, no inconsiderable portion of poetical spirit.†

After all, a better translation of Virgil than any we yet have seen, seems to be a work more to be wished for than expected. Dr Beattie himself has said in another place, that "It is not possible "for one who is ignorant of Latin, to have any adequate notion of

* Lives of the English Poets, vol. ii. 12mo. p. 283.

† Vide Appendix. [K.]

"Virgil. The choice of his words, and the modulation of his "numbers, have never been copied with tolerable success in any "other tongue.*

In the following letter we have an account of one of those coincidences in writing, of which it is sometimes difficult to say, whether they happen by accident, or are to be classed under the head of plagiarism.

It seems to me to be by no means improbable, that both the translator of Musæus and Dr Beattie may have written the line in question under an impression on the memory, even unknown to themselves, of the beautiful threnody of David on the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, in which the royal Hebrew bard employs the very same turn of expression.†

LETTER II.

DR BEATTIE TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 18th August, 1760.

"IN a translation just published of Musæus's Loves of Hero "and Leander," I was surprised to find the following line,

"They liv'd united, and united died;

which is exactly the same with one in my epitaph on the two brothers. In order to obviate the imputation commonly applied in such cases, I have subjoined the date to my little piece, which (juxta MS. vetus) appears to be the first of November 1757. Instances of this sameness in expression, as well as sentiment, have so often happened, even in my experience, that I have wondered at some of the criterions proposed for the detection of imitations, by the accurate and judicious Mr Hurd‡ in his letters to Mr

* Essays on the Utility of Classical Learning, p. 758.

† 2 Kings, ch. i. v. 23.

‡ The present Lord Bishop of Worcester.

Mason. I remember, in particular, he will not allow Milton the honour of making Death

"Grin horribly a ghastly smile,"

because Spencer mentions grinning in some part of his Fairy Queen. That pamphlet of Mr Hurd's is, notwithstanding, an ingenious performance, and evinces a great compass of classical knowledge both ancient and modern.

"I have never yet seen the "Fragments of Highland Poetry." I see one of these fragments versified in a late Magazine, and to better purpose (a few passages excepted), than I did expect. But does not the spirit of such compositions evaporate, when it is strained through the syllable-squeezing alembic? Did you ever see a version of the Psalms of David in metre, of Job, or the Song of Solomon, that possessed all the pathos, and simplicity, and sublimity of our prose translation? The motley mixture of antique and modish phrases, that must necessarily take place in all such paraphrases, gives a grotesque appearance to the whole, and puts one in mind of Cato arrayed in a full-bottomed periwig."

The following letter contains some strictures on Rousseau's "Eloise," of which he afterwards gave a short character in his "Dissertation on Fable and Romance," p. 570.

LETTER III.

DR BEATTIE TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 24th October, 1761.

"I AM just now employed in reading the first volume of the "Nouvelle Eloise." The author seems to possess great knowledge of the human heart: his reflections, in general, are beautiful, original, and just; his sensibility exquisite, and his eloquence wonderfully affecting. But though I grant him these excellencies, I must be pardoned, when I censure either his judgment or his vir-

tue. If he meant to promote the cause of virtue, it was certainly a proof of an egregious failure in his judgment, that he made choice of a fable whose tendency seems directly contrary. Vanbrugh, and Congreve, and Rochester, only inflame the imagination; Rousseau poisons the principles, and misleads the understanding; the former is a momentary evil, the other is permanent. And as a harlot, when she assumes the garb, the features, and the language of virtue, is much more dangerous than when she speaks her own words, and wears her proper dress; so I think the "Nou-"velle Eloise" a much more dangerous book than all the ribaldry printed in the reign of Charles the Second."

The following letter, written at the period when Ossian's poems made their first appearance, shows the accuracy of Dr Beattie's critical taste and judgment, which could not be swayed from the genuine dictates of truth and nature in poetry, even by the strong torrent of applause with which that singular production was received at that time, by the learned as well as unlearned of this country.

LETTER IV.

DR BEATTIE TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 29th March, 1762.

"I HAVE now read Fingal; but I am at a loss to know whether I should give you my opinion of it or not. My humble tribute of praise (were I disposed to praise it) would be lost amidst that universal deluge of approbation poured upon it, both from the critics of London and of Scotland. And were I inclined to censure it, my suffrage would be as little regarded as the loitering javelin which palsied Priam threw against the heaven-tempered shield of Pyrrhus—*telum imbelle sine ictu.* The particular beauties of this wonderful work are irresistibly striking, and I flatter myself that I am as sensible of them as another. But to that part of its merit which exalts it, considered as a whole, above the Iliad or Æneid,

and its author above Homer or Virgil, I am insensible. Yet I understand, that of critics not a few aver Ossian to have been a greater genius than either of these poets. Yet a little while, and, I doubt not, the world will be of a different opinion. Homer was as much admired about three months ago—I speak not of the present moment, for Ossian just now is all in all—I say, Homer was lately admired as much as he was three thousand years ago. Will the admiration of our Highland bard be as permanent? And will it be as universal as learning itself?

"Knowledge of the human heart is a science of the highest dignity. It is recommended not only by its own importance, but also by this, that none but an exalted genius is capable of it. To delineate the objects of the material world requires a fine imagination, but to penetrate into the mental system, and to describe its different objects, with all their distinguishing (though sometimes almost imperceptible) peculiarities, requires an imagination far more extensive and vigorous. It is this kind of imagination which appears so conspicuous in the works of Shakespeare and Homer, and which, in my opinion, raises them above all other poets whatsoever; I mean not only that talent by which they can adapt themselves to the heart of their readers, and excite whatever affection they please, in which the former plainly stands unrivalled; I mean also that wonderfully penetrating and plastic faculty, which is capable of representing every species of character, not, as our ordinary poets do, by a high shoulder, a wry mouth, or gigantic stature, but by hitting off, with a delicate hand, the distinguishing feature, and that in such a manner as makes it easily known from all others whatsoever, however similar to a superficial eye. Hotspur and Henry V. are heroes resembling one another, yet very distinct in their characters; Falstaff, and Pistol, and Bardolph, are buffoons, but each in his own way; Desdemona and Juliet are not the same; Bottom, and Dogberry, and the grave-diggers are different characters; and the same may be said of the most similar of Homer's characters; each has some mark that makes him essentially different from the rest. But these great masters are not more eminent in distinguishing than in completing their characters. I am a little acquainted with a Cato, a Sempronius, a Tinsel, a Sir Charles Easy, &c. but I am perfectly acquainted with Achil-

les, Hector, Falstaff, Lear, Pistol, and Quickly; I know them more thoroughly than any other person of my acquaintance.

"If this accurate delineation of character be allowed the highest species of poetry (and this, I think, is generally allowed), may I not ask whether Ossian is not extremely defective in the *highest* species of poetry? It is said, indeed, that this poet lived in an age when mankind, being in a state of almost total barbarism, were incapable of that diversity of character which is found in countries improved by commerce and learning, and that therefore he had no materials for a diversity of character. But it is certain that diversities of character are found among the rudest savages; and it is the poet's business, not to portray the characters as they really exist (which is left to the historian), but to represent them such as they *might have* existed. But, to have done, Ossian seems really to have very little knowledge of the human heart; his chief talent lies in describing inanimate objects, and therefore he belongs (according to my principles), not to the highest, but to an inferior order of poets."

It is to be observed, that, in this letter, Dr Beattie does not at all enter into the question respecting the authenticity of the poems of Ossian. He confines his strictures merely to their merit as poetical compositions, such as we have them, of whatsoever period. And he views them solely in comparison with other poets of acknowledged celebrity.

The controversy respecting the authenticity of these poems of "Ossian" is well known. When Macpherson published first his "Fingal," and afterwards his "Temora," he exhibited them as being complete and regular epic poems, of very remote antiquity, which had existed in the Highlands and islands of Scotland, although the parts had been scattered and disjointed, through lapse of time; which he had searched for, and been so fortunate as to discover; and which, when thus collected, and brought together into regular order, he had translated and published as a whole. This story, as told by Macpherson, was at first believed by many, in its full extent, even by men of high character in the literary world. Dr Blair, in particular, was so persuaded of their being

completely genuine, as to write a dissertation in proof of their antiquity, and illustrative of their beauties.* This opinion, he formed partly from the apparent similarity between the poetry thus attributed to Ossian, and that of some detached pieces traditionally preserved in the Highlands, in which the same names were found, as well as from some other points of resemblance; and partly perhaps from a national vanity, arising from the possession of so extraordinary a performance as "Fingal" certainly is, if genuine.

Others, again insisted, and do still insist, that the whole was an impudent forgery of Macpherson's own, which, having once produced as the work of the Highland bard, he would not retract, notwithstanding many arguments against their authenticity, drawn from their own internal evidence, as well as from his refusal to comply with the demands repeatedly made upon him to put an end to the controversy, by exhibiting the original manuscript of the poems which he had translated. At the head of this set of critics was Dr Johnson, who, in his tour to the Hebrides, has strenuously maintained their being altogether a forgery.

That there never existed poems exactly in the form in which "Fingal" and "Temora" were published by Macpherson, seems now to be the opinion most generally entertained. But it is still maintained by many, with the strongest appearance of reason, that there certainly were poetical compositions, consisting of songs and ballads and other pieces, existing in the Highlands many years before Macpherson was born, of which sufficient traces are even yet to be found in various parts of that country, some in a more, some in a less perfect form. From these scattered fragments it probably was, that Macpherson, by imitations and additions of his own, wrought his work into a whole, and thus gave it the appearance, in some degree, of a regular epic poem. Nor is it very difficult, perhaps, to conceive how these fragments may have been handed down from father to son, even without the use of writing, among a people who, with scarcely any knowledge of agriculture, commerce, or useful arts, filled up the vacancies of a pastoral life, by the recital of those popular songs and ballads. This is a practice not

* "A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian, the son of Fingal. "By Hugh Blair, D. D. one of the Ministers of the High Church, and "Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the University of Edinburgh.

peculiar to the Highlands of Scotland, but to be found in all nations, who, by their local situation, in the midst of hills and fastnesses, are cut off from any great degree of intercourse with neighbouring countries, farther advanced in the arts of polished life. Nor will it appear so very wonderful, if, in this manner, that poetry may have been preserved, which is believed by many to have existed in the Highlands, when the powers of the memory are considered, and the strength it acquired by the perpetual exercise of listening to the bards, who were an appendage of the state and magnificence of a Highland chieftain.

But Macpherson is dead, so that no farther information can be obtained from him; and the researches that are now made must be attended with great difficulty, when the means of enquiry are daily becoming fewer, from the lapse of time, and the gradual disuse of those local manners and customs by which the Highlanders were once distinguished.

The misfortune therefore is, that it seems to be almost impossible to detect the imitations and interpolations which Macpherson has intermixed with what may have been genuine and original of ancient Gaelic poetry, of the reality of which, in some form or other, I cannot help being myself a strong believer.*

In the following letter Dr Beattie gives the first hint of his "Essay on Poetry," composed that year, but not published till 1776, along with the edition, in quarto, of his "Essay on Truth."

In this letter mention also is made, of a poem under the title of the "Grotesquiad," which I never either saw or heard of. It was undoubtedly of the mock heroic or satiric kind, a species of poetry of which Dr Beattie used to express himself uncommonly fond; and being, in all likelihood, a *jeu d'esprit* of the moment, he had wisely suppressed it. I find no trace of any such production among his papers. He speaks likewise of his translation of Addison's "Battle of the Pigmies and Cranes," which has since been published.

* The Highland Society of Edinburgh are at present engaged in an investigation of the authenticity of the "Poems of Ossian," and from their enquiries, it is expected that considerable light will be thrown on the subject.

LETTER V.

DR BEATTIE TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 28th December, 1762.

***** PRAY what is like to be the fate of the "Grotesquiad?" It is natural for a father to be concerned about his offspring, though it be spurious. I shall leave it to you to do with that poem as you think proper. I think you said that Pitt had translated the "Pygmies" of Addison.

"You will perhaps remember, that in March last I wrote a letter to you, containing some strictures on the "Poems of Ossian," then newly published. The remark which I made on that occasion was, that the poetry of that old bard, however exquisite in its kind, was not the highest in dignity, and that, therefore, its author could have no title to be ranked above Milton, or Homer, or Shakespeare, who have all made a distinguished figure in the highest species of poetry. This was a subject on which I often had occasion to expatiate in conversation, while the rage of extolling the Highland bard continued. It was then that I formed a design of throwing together some thoughts by way of essay on the comparative dignity of the several kinds of poetry; a subject which, so far as I know, has never been treated in a philosophical manner by any critic, ancient or modern. As I applied my thoughts more seriously to this inquiry, I found the plan enlarge itself to a very considerable extent. I have, however, reduced it to something of form, and find that it will naturally consist of three parts. The first part contains a philosophical inquiry into the nature of poetry in general, considered as an imitation of nature, by means of language. In the second part, I propose to consider the principles which determine the degrees of our approbation in the imitative arts, particularly poetry. In the third part, I intend to consider the several kinds of poetry, with a view to these principles, and to determine their comparative excellence according to the degrees of approbation which they naturally command. The first part, which is finished, made a discourse of an hour and a half, which I

read to a philosophical society, composed of some of our literati, who were very well pleased with it, and seemed to think that I had made several new observations, and set some points of criticism in a new light. The discussion of the second and third parts I intend to attempt during the summer vacation."

In the summer of 1763, Dr Beattie went, for the first time, to London. Of this journey I am not able to give any account, as it had taken place before my acquaintance with him commenced. It was most probably a journey of curiosity merely: for Beattie was at that time unknown in London, and had scarcely any acquaintance there, except the late Andrew Millar, the bookseller, who had published his poems in the year 1760, of whom I find him complaining bitterly in some of his letters, for his negligence in not promoting their sale. In one of his letters to Mr Arbuthnot, after his return home, he mentions a gentleman of Scotland, of their mutual acquaintance, who had accompanied him on a visit to Pope's house at Twickenham.

In some of his letters, at this time, he gives an intimation of a poem upon which he was at work, under the title of the "Judgment of Paris," a classical fable known to every school-boy. Ancient authors have mentioned it as a poetical or legendary tale; and, in modern times, Congreve has written a masque under that title, and upon the ancient plan. Dr Beattie wished to follow a different course, and thought he could render his "Judgment of Paris" subservient to the cause of virtue, by personifying wisdom, ambition, and pleasure in the characters of his three goddesses. It was published in the spring of 1765.*

The poem opens with a most beautiful description of the landscape where the scene is laid; and the appearance of the three

* Of the plan and intended mode of execution of this poem, he gives an account in two letters to Mr Arbuthnot, which I have thought it right to preserve, by inserting them in the appendix. For although the poem was never republished after the edition of the year 1766, copies of it are still preserved in many libraries, and it is but justice to Dr Beattie, that the public should know what his original design was in writing the poem. Appendix, [L.]

goddesses, with their characteristic attributes, is described in a vein of the richest imagery, which I have thought it worth while to preserve, by inserting those lines in the appendix. But it will probably be thought, that the poet's personification of virtues, under the semblance of those celestial personages, is rather too metaphysical, and is scarcely compensated by the beauties of the poetry. This, indeed, seems to have been pretty much the decision of the public, for the "Judgment of Paris" never was a popular poem. It was republished in the edition of Beattie's poems in the year 1766. But he has himself omitted it in all his subsequent editions.

LETTER VI.

DR BEATTIE TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 12th December, 1763.

"SINCE you left us, I have been reading Tasso's "Jerusalem," in the translation lately published by Hoole. I was not a little anxious to peruse a poem which is so famous over all Europe, and has so often been mentioned as a rival to the "Iliad," "Æneid," and "Paradise Lost." It is certainly a noble work; and though it seems to me to be inferior to the three poems just mentioned, yet I cannot help thinking it in the rank next to these. As for the other modern attempts at the "Epopee," the "Henriade" of Voltaire, the "Epigoniad" of Wilkie, the "Leonidas" of Glover, not to mention the "Arthur" of Blackmore, they are not to be compared with it. Tasso possesses an exuberant and sublime imagination; though in exuberance it seems, in my opinion, inferior to our Spencer, and in sublimity inferior to Milton. Were I to compare Milton's genius with Tasso's, I would say, that the sublime of the latter is flashy and fluctuating, while that of the former diffuses an uniform, steady, and vigorous blaze: Milton is more majestic, Tasso more dazzling. Dryden, it seems, was of opinion, that the "Jerusalem Delivered" was the only poem of modern times that deserved the name of epic; but it is certain that criticism was not this writer's talent; and I think it is evident, from some passages of his works, that he either did not, or would not,

understand the "Paradise Lost." Tasso borrows his plot and principal characters from Homer, but his manner resembles Virgil's. He is certainly much obliged to Virgil, and scruples not to imitate, nor to translate him on many occasions. In the *pathetic* he is far inferior both to Homer, to Virgil, and to Milton. His characters, though different, are not always distinct, and want those masterly and distinguishing strokes which the genius of Homer and Shakespeare, and of them only, knows how to delineate. Tasso excels in describing pleasurable scenes, and seems peculiarly fond of such as have a reference to the passion of love. Yet, in characterising this passion, he is far inferior, not only to Milton, but also to Virgil, whose *fourth book* he has been at great pains to imitate. The translation is smooth and flowing; but in dignity, and variety of numbers, is often defective, and often labours under a feebleness and prolixity of phrase, evidently proceeding either from want of skill, or from want of leisure in the versifier."

In the month of November 1764 Churchill died; a writer who made no little noise in his day, not only from his having assumed the character of an open and professed satirist, but from his possessing no inconsiderable strength of thought, with a vigorous, though slovenly, energy of expression, which, notwithstanding all his profaneness, faction, calumny, and ribaldry, still preserves, in a certain degree, his reputation as a poet. As Churchill, at the time of his death, was extremely unpopular in Scotland, not only on account of some of his own poetical productions, but of his connexion with Wilkes, who, at that time, was publishing the "North Briton," a periodical paper, peculiarly levelled against Scotland, it was proposed to Dr. Beattie, that he should write some verses on the death of Churchill, a task which he not unwillingly undertook.

The "Verses on the death of Churchill" appeared soon after without the author's name, and had a rapid sale. Of this poem Dr Beattie himself appears, by his letters written at the time, to have been exceedingly fond; and they who yet remember the violence of the political contests of those days, with what intemperate zeal Churchill prostituted his poetical talents in the support of the plans and pursuits of the seditious demagogues, who, under the

banners of Wilkes, set all decency, good order, and good government at defiance, will not wonder that Dr Beattie, whose principles and opinions were the very reverse of theirs, should feel his indignation roused by the popular applause with which he saw Churchill distinguished while he lived, and heard of the honours which were said to be preparing for his memory when dead, by the proposal of erecting a monument to him in Westminster Abbey. The lines are, therefore, marked with more than ordinary asperity, though perhaps not more than the occasion warranted. The allusion, indeed, in the conclusion of the poem, was deservedly found fault with. In the edition of Dr Beattie's poems, published the year following, he omitted the name of "Churchill," and prefaced the verses with an address in prose, in which he vindicates the keenness of his satire. In the subsequent editions of his poetical works,* he omitted the lines altogether.

In the autumn of the year 1765, Mr. Gray, whose "Elegy in a "Country Church-yard," and noble lyric compositions, have raised his name to the first rank of British poets, came to Scotland on a visit to the late earl of Strathmore. Dr Beattie, who was an enthusiastic admirer of Gray, as soon as he heard of his arrival, addressed to him the following letter. This procured to Dr Beattie an invitation to Glammis castle, which led to a friendship and correspondence between these two eminent poets and amiable men, which continued, without interruption, till the death of Mr Gray, on the 31st July, 1771.

LETTER VII.

DR BEATTIE TO MR GRAY.

Marischal College of Aberdeen, 30th August, 1765.

"IF I thought it necessary to offer an apology for venturing to address you in this abrupt manner, I should be very much at a loss how to begin. I might plead my admiration of your genius, and my attachment to your character; but who is he, that could not, with truth, urge the same excuse for intruding upon your retirement?

* Vide Appendix, [M.]

I might plead my earnest desire to be personally acquainted with a man whom I have so long and so passionately admired in his writings; but thousands, of greater consequence than I, are ambitious of the same honour. I, indeed, must either flatter myself that no apology is necessary, or otherwise, I must despair of obtaining what has long been the object of my most ardent wishes; I must for ever forfeit all hopes of seeing you, and conversing with you.

"It was yesterday I received the agreeable news of your being in Scotland, and of your intending to visit some parts of it. Will you permit us to hope, that we shall have an opportunity, at Aberdeen, of thanking you in person, for the honour you have done to Britain, and to the poetic art, by your inestimable compositions, and of offering you all that we have that deserves your acceptance, namely, hearts full of esteem, respect, and affection? If you cannot come so far northward, let me at least be acquainted with the place of your residence, and permitted to wait on you. Forgive, sir, this request; forgive me if I urge it with earnestness, for, indeed, it concerns me nearly; and do me the justice to believe, that I am, with the most sincere attachment, and most respectful esteem, &c. &c. &c.

"P. S. Dr Carlisle of Musselburgh, and Dr Wight of Glasgow, acquainted me of your being in Scotland. It was from them I learned that my name was not wholly unknown to you."

It was in the course of this year, 1765, that my acquaintance with Dr Beattie began. We first met at the house of our mutual friend, Mr Arbuthnot, in Edinburgh; and having occasion to pass some time that autumn in Aberdeenshire, I renewed my intercourse with him there. As those with whom he chiefly associated at Aberdeen were my most intimate friends, we were much together; and that friendship and correspondence took place between us, which I regarded, not only as my pride, but as a source of the purest pleasure; and I may fairly add, that if I am not a better man for the correspondence and instructive conversation of Dr Beattie, great will be my condemnation at my last account.

From that correspondence, therefore, which continued to the end of his days, when the decay of his faculties would not permit him to carry it on any longer, I am now enabled to begin to elucidate still farther his writings and his character.

But I am not without my apprehensions here, that I may be charged with no small degree of vanity for publishing to the world those warm expressions of esteem, affection, and gratitude towards me, which occur in several of the letters addressed to me by Dr Beattie. And I own I *do* feel some little pride (an honest pride, I hope) in preserving and recording *some* testimonies of that favourable opinion which such a man as Dr Beattie was pleased to entertain of me. I can, however, at the same time assure the reader (as some apology for myself), that I have suppressed much stronger passages of that nature, and a much larger number of them than I have allowed myself to retain.

LETTER VIII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 7th December, 1765.

"THE receipt of your very obliging letter ought to have been sooner acknowledged. I should abhor myself had my delay been owing to indolence: possessed as I am with a most grateful sense of your favours, with the highest regard for your friendship, and the most zealous attachment to your character: my delay was indeed owing to another cause.

"I have been employed for some time past in writing a kind of poetical epistle to Mr Blacklock, in return for a present which he was so kind as to make me of his works, accompanied with a very handsome copy of verses: and I had intended to send under the same cover my letter to you, and my verses to Mr Blacklock. The verses are indeed finished; but as there are some passages in them which seem to need correction, I must, for some time, let them lie by me; for I have found by experience, that I am a much more impartial judge of such of my works as I have almost quite forgotten, than of such as are fresh in my memory. The epistle,

when ready, will be sent to Dr Gregory's care, and he will show it to you and to Mr Arbuthnot, as soon as it comes to hand.

"I hope you will pardon me, if I cannot return such an answer to your letter as it deserves. I want words to express how much I value your friendship. Allow me to assure you, that I am not one of the ungrateful, nor (if good intentions can confer any merit on a character) one of the undeserving. The friendship of the good is the object of my highest ambition: if I cannot lay claim to it, I shall at least approve myself not entirely unworthy of it. Let me be tried by my conduct, and if I shall ever give a good man reason to be ashamed of owning me for his friend, then let my name be despised to the latest posterity.

"I intend, if possible, to publish this winter a new edition of all my original pieces of poetry. I wrote to Mr Arbuthnot some time ago, to treat with a bookseller, but have received no answer, which disappoints me a good deal, as the season is fast advancing, and as it will soon be too late to apply to another, in case the person to whom he promised to apply should decline my offer. Pray, will you advise me to insert the verses on Churchill in the collection? I do not think them the worst part of my works, and therefore should be sorry to lose them altogether. My scheme, at present, is to strike out the name of Churchill, and insert a fictitious one. But in this I would wish to be directed by my friends.

"I am sorry you did not see Mr Gray on his return; you would have been much pleased with him. Setting aside his merit as a poet, which, however, in my opinion, is greater than any of his contemporaries can boast, in this or in any other nation, I found him possessed of the most exact taste, the soundest judgment, and the most extensive learning. He is happy in a singular facility of expression. His conversation abounds in original observations, delivered with no appearance of sententious formality, and seeming to arise spontaneously without study or premeditation. I passed two very agreeable days with him at Glammis, and found him as easy in his manners, and as communicative and frank, as I could have wished."

The following letter, from Dr Beattie to Dr Blacklock,* is the first, I find, of their correspondence, and does equal honour to his head and to his heart.

LETTER IX.

DR BEATTIE TO DR BLACKLOCK.

Aberdeen, 15th January, 1766.

"I CANNOT express how agreeably I was flattered by the present you were pleased to make me of your works, and by the elegant verses which accompanied it. The acquaintance of good men has always appeared to me almost the only temporal object worthy of my ambition; and I can, with great sincerity, declare, that the consciousness of having attained your friendship, yields me much higher pleasure than any compliments that can be paid to my poor merit. Your genius and character I have long known and admired; and although remoteness of place and diversity of employment had almost extinguished my hopes of becoming personally acquainted with you, I still flattered myself, that, in some way or other, I should find an opportunity of letting you know how highly I esteem and love you. This opportunity I have found at last, and it is with the utmost pleasure that I avail myself of it.

"On receiving your valuable present, I resolved to attempt an answer in verse; but, by reason of many unavoidable interruptions from business, from bad health, and from studies of a most unpoetical nature, it advanced more slowly than I could have wished. I found means, however, to bring it to a conclusion two months ago, and sent it in a cover addressed to Dr Gregory. I heard, some days ago, that it had come safely to hand, and that you was pleased to give it a favourable reception. You will easily perceive, by its miscellaneousness, that the composition of it must have been interrupted with frequent and long intervals; yet I have attempted to give it a kind of unity, and I hope, upon the whole, it is not more incoherent than a poetical epistle may be allowed to be. There is, perhaps, more asperity in it than you can approve;

* For some account of Dr. Blacklock, see Appendix, [N.]

there is, indeed, more than I will undertake to excuse; but when one dips into certain subjects, it is perhaps difficult to preserve that meekness of expression, and tame acquiescence of sentiment, which, in the ordinary intercourse of mankind, is, for the most part, so agreeable. But whatever you may think of particular expressions, you will not blame the general design; the thoughts, I trust, are such as become an honest man, who is more ambitious of approving himself to his own conscience than to the world. Let the sincerity of the writer be also pleaded in favour of the essay; for though written in rhyme, it is a faithful transcript of the real sentiments of his heart. Indeed, I have always thought it a piece of contemptible affectation in an author to assume, in his writings, a character which is none of his own. If a man's sentiments be bad, he ought to conceal them altogether; but, if good, I see no reason why he should be ashamed of them. However, as a very general prejudice prevails against the sincerity of poetical protestations, I could not rest till I had assured you, in plain prose, that I set a very high value upon your friendship, and will ever account it my honour to act such a part as may merit the continuance of it.

"That you may long live an honour to your country, a blessing to your family, and the delight of your acquaintance, is my earnest prayer."

LETTER X.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 30th January, 1765.

"YOUR zeal in promoting my interest demands my warmest acknowledgments; yet, for want of adequate expressions, I scarce know in what manner to pay them. I must therefore leave you to guess at my gratitude, by the emotions which would arise in your own heart, on receiving a very important favour from a person of whom you had merited nothing, and to whom you could make no just return.

"I suppose you have seen my letter to Dr Blacklock. I hope, in due time, to be acquainted with your sentiments concerning it. I know not whether I have gained my point or not: but in com-

posing that letter I was more studious of simplicity of diction than in any other of my pieces. I am not, indeed, in this respect, so very scrupulous as some critics of these times. I see no harm in using an expressive epithet, when, without the use of such an epithet, one cannot do justice to his idea. Even a compounded epithet, provided it be suitable to the genius of our language, and authenticated by some good writer, may often, in my opinion, produce a good effect. My notion of simplicity discards every thing from style which is affected, superfluous, indefinite, or obscure; but admits every grace, which, without encumbering a sentiment, does really embellish and enforce it. I am no friend to those prettinesses of modern style, which one may call the pompous earrings, and flounces of the muses, which, with some writers, are so highly in vogue at present; they may, by their glare and fluttering, take off the eye from imperfections; but I am convinced they disguise and disfigure the charms of genuine beauty.

"I have of late been much engaged in metaphysics; at least I have been labouring with all my might to overturn that visionary science. I am a member of a club in this town, who style themselves the Philosophical Society. We have meetings every fortnight, and deliver discourses in our turn. I hope you will not think the worse of this Society, when I tell you, that to it the world is indebted for "A comparative view of the Faculties of Man," and an "Enquiry into Human Nature, on the principles of Common Sense." Criticism is the field in which I have hitherto (chiefly at least) chosen to expatiate: but an accidental question lately furnished me with an hint, which I made the subject of a two hours discourse at our last meeting. I have for some time wished for an opportunity of publishing something relating to the business of my own profession, and I think I have now found an opportunity; for the doctrine of my last discourse seems to be of importance, and I have already finished two-thirds of my plan. My doctrine is this: that as we know nothing of the eternal relations of things, *that* to us *is* and must be *truth*, which we feel that we must believe; and *that* to us is falsehood, which we feel that we must disbelieve. I have shown that all genuine reasoning does ultimately terminate in certain principles, which it is impossible to disbelieve, and as impossible to prove: that therefore the ultimate standard of truth to us is common sense, or that instinctive con-

viction into which all true reasoning does resolve itself: that therefore what contradicts common sense is in itself absurd, however subtle the arguments which support it: for such is the ambiguity and insufficiency of language, that it is easy to argue on either side of any question with acuteness sufficient to confound one who is not expert in the art of reasoning. My principles, in the main, are not essentially different from Dr Reid's; but they seem to offer a more compendious method of destroying scepticism. I intend to show (and have already in part shown), that all sophistical reasoning is marked with certain characters which distinguish it from true investigation: and thus I flatter myself I shall be able to discover a method of detecting sophistry, even when one is not able to give a logical confutation of its arguments. I intend farther to enquire into the nature of that modification of intellect which qualifies a man for being a sceptic; and I think I am able to prove that it is not genius, but the want of it. However, it will be summer before I can finish my project. I own it is not without indignation, that I see sceptics and their writings (which are the bane not only of science, but also of virtue) so much in vogue in the present age."

In the summer of 1766, a new edition of Dr Beattie's Poems was published in London. In this edition all his poetical translations were omitted; and of the pieces formerly published only the following were retained—

"The Ode to Peace.
"Retirement, an Ode.
"Ode to Hope.
"The Triumph of Melancholy.
"Elegy occasioned by the Death of a Lady.
"The Hares, a Fable."

On some of these earlier pieces he had made considerable improvements; and he had added,

"The Judgment of Paris,"

which had been printed as a pamphlet; also,

"Verses, on the report of a Monument to be erected in West-
"minster Abbey, to the Memory of a late Author."

These were the verses on the death of Churchill, which had also been published separately. From this poem he had withdrawn Churchill's name, and substituted that of "Bufo," and had prefaced it with an apologetical letter.

"The Wolf and the Shepherds, a Fable;" in praise of which much cannot be said; for it has been already remarked, that "Fable" was by no means a species of composition in which Dr Beattie excelled.

"An Epistle to the Reverend Mr (afterwards Dr) Thomas Blacklock." This is a most excellent performance. While at the same time it pays many just and striking compliments to Dr Blacklock, it may be considered as of the nature of an ethic epistle, breathing a noble spirit and freedom of sentiment, with great richness of poetry and harmony of versification.

The last piece of the collection is "The Battle of the Pigmies "and the Cranes;" a translation from Addison's "Pygmæo-"gerano-machia," which certainly is at least equal to, if it does not surpass the original. Of this piece he was himself more than usually fond. "It is written," says he, in a letter to a friend, "in "Ovid's manner. I have affected a greater solemnity of style and "versification, and have bestowed a few heightening touches on "all the images."

Of these additional pieces, "The Judgment of Paris," "The Lines on Churchill," "The Wolf and the Shepherds," and "The Epistle to Blacklock," have been omitted in the subsequent editions of Dr Beattie's Poems. With the three first, we may easily dispense; but we regret, with reason, I think, the loss of the "Epistle to Dr Blacklock."

This republication was received by the public equally well with the former.

LETTER XI.

DR JOHN GREGORY* TO DR BEATTIE.

Edinburgh, 1st January, 1766.

"MR GRAY got the books. He spoke of you in terms of very high esteem. I think him an excellent critic, and I am persuaded you found him so. But though I think he could give you an excellent advice in what relates to that intrinsic merit of your compositions, which will be regarded by real judges, of which there is not one in a thousand who read them; yet I would not depend much on his judgment of that sort of merit which makes a poet popular among the bulk of readers. It is a sentiment that very universally prevails, that poetry is a light kind of reading, which one takes up only for a little amusement, and that therefore it should be so perspicuous as not to require a second reading. This sentiment would bear hard on some of your best things; and on all Gray's, except his "Church-yard Elegy," which he told me, with a good deal of acrimony, owed its popularity entirely to the subject, and that the public would have received it as well if it had been written in prose. Dr Blair thinks your verses on Churchill the best you ever made. I do not quite agree with him there, though I think it one of the best and most spirited satires that was ever written, but we all agree that two or three lines should be altered.

"What I earnestly wish is to have you employ your genius on some subject that will be generally interesting, and which can alone procure you that universal fame which you deserve, and will likewise procure you a more solid reward of your labours."

* For some account of Dr Gregory, see p. 24.

LETTER XII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 18th September, 1766.

"YOU flatter me very agreeably, by wishing me to engage in a translation of Tasso's "Jerusalem." If I had all the other accomplishments necessary to fit me for such an undertaking, (which is by no means the case) I have not as yet acquired a sufficient knowledge of the Italian language, although I understand it tolerably well. My proficiency would have been much more considerable, if my health had allowed me to study; but I have been obliged to estrange myself from books for some months past. I intend to persist in my resolution of acquiring that language, for I am wonderfully delighted with the Italian poetry. It does not seem to abound much in those strokes of fancy that raise admiration and astonishment, in which I think the English very much superior; but it possesses all the milder graces in an eminent degree; in simplicity, harmony, delicacy, and tenderness, it is altogether without a rival. I cannot well account for that neglect of the Italian literature, which, for about a century past, has been fashionable among us. I believe Mr Addison may have been instrumental in introducing, or, at least, in vindicating it; though I am inclined to think, that he took, upon trust, from Boileau, that censure which he past upon the Italian poets, and which has been current among the critics ever since the days of the "Spectator."*

"A good translation of Tasso would be a very valuable accession to English literature; but it would be a most difficult undertaking, on account of the genius of our language, which, though in the highest degree copious, expressive, and sonorous, is not to be compared with the Italian in delicacy, sweetness, and simplicity of composition; and these are qualities so characteristical of Tasso, that a translator would do the highest injustice to his author, who should fail in transfusing them into his version. Besides, a work of

* It will be remembered, that this observation was made by Dr Beattie very nearly forty years ago. Since that period Italian literature has been much more cultivated in Britain, than it was at his first acquaintance with it.

such a nature must not only be laborious, but expensive; so that a prudent person would not choose to engage in it without some hope, not only of being indemnified, but even rewarded; and such a hope it would be madness in me to entertain. Yet, to show that I am not averse from the work (for luckily for poor bards, poetry is sometimes its own reward, and is at any time amply rewarded, when it gratifies the desire of a friend), I design, as soon as I have leisure, and sufficient skill in the language, to try my hand at a short specimen. In the mean time, I flatter myself, you will not think the worse of me for not making a thousand protestations of my insufficiency, and as many acknowledgments of my gratitude, for the honour you do me in supposing me capable of such a work. The truth is, I have so much to say on this subject, that if I were only to begin, I should never have done. Your friendship, and your good opinion, which I shall ever account it my honour to cultivate, I do indeed value more than I can express.

"Your neglect of the modern philosophical sceptics, who have too much engaged the attention of these times, does equal honour to your understanding and to your heart. To suppose that every thing may be made matter of dispute, is an exceeding false principle, subversive of all true science, and prejudicial to the happiness of mankind. To confute without convincing is a common case, and indeed a very easy matter: in all conviction (at least in all moral and religious conviction), the heart is engaged, as well as the understanding; and the understanding may be satisfied, or at least confounded, with a doctrine, from which the heart recoils with the strongest aversion. This is not the language of a logician; but this, I hope, is the language of an honest man, who considers all science as frivolous, which does not make men wiser and better; and to puzzle with words, without producing conviction (which is all that our metaphysical sceptics have been able to do), can never promote either the wisdom or the virtue of mankind. It is strange that men should so often forget, that "Happiness is "our being's end and aim." Happiness is desirable for its own sake: truth is desirable only as a mean of producing happiness: for, who would not prefer an agreeable delusion to a melancholy truth? What then is the use of that philosophy, which aims to inculcate truth at the expence of happiness, by introducing doubt and disbelief in the place of confidence and hope? Surely the pro-

moters of all such philosophy are either the enemies of mankind, or the dupes of their own most egregious folly. I mean not to make any concessions in favour of metaphysical truth: genuine truth and genuine happiness were never inconsistent: but metaphysical truth (such as we find in our sceptical systems) is not genuine, for it is perpetually changing; and no wonder, since it depends not on the common sense of mankind (which is always the same), but varies, according as the talents and inclinations of different authors are different. The doctrines of metaphysical scepticism are either true or false; if false, we have little to do with them; if true, they prove the fallacy of the human faculties, and therefore prove too much; for it follows, as an undeniable consequence, that all human doctrines whatsoever (themselves not excepted) are fallacious, and consequently, pernicious, insignificant, and vain.

LETTER XIII.

DR BEATTIE TO DR BLACKLOCK.

Aberdeen, 22d September, 1766.

"I AM not a little flattered by your friendly and spirited vindication of the poem on *Bufo*.* Among the invidious and malicious I have got a few enemies on account of that performance; among the candid and generous, not one. This, joined to the approbation of my own conscience, is entirely sufficient to make me easy on that head. I have not yet heard whether my little work has been approved or condemned in England. I have not even heard whether it has been published or not. However, the days of romantic hope are now happily over with me, as well as the desire of public applause; a desire of which I never had any title to expect the gratification, and which, though I had been able to gratify it, would not have contributed a single mite to my happiness. Yet I am thankful to providence for having endued me with an inclination to poetry; for, though I have never been supremely blest in my own muse, I have certainly been gratified, in the most exquisite degree, by the productions of others.

* "Verses on the Report of a Monument to be erected in Westminster "Abbey, to the memory of a late Author." See p. 56.

"These pieces of mine from which I have received the highest entertainment, are such as are altogether improper for publication, being written in a sort of burlesque humour, for the amusement of some particular friend, or for some select company; of these I have a pretty large collection; and, though I should be ashamed to be publicly known as the author of many of them, I cannot help entertaining a certain partiality towards them, arising, perhaps, from this circumstance in their favour, that the pleasure they have yielded me has been altogether sincere, unmixed with that chagrin which never fails to attend an unfortunate publication.

"Not long ago I began a poem in the style and stanza of Spenser, in which I propose to give full scope to my inclination, and be either droll or pathetic, descriptive or sentimental, tender or satirical, as the humour strikes me; for, if I mistake not, the manner which I have adopted, admits equally of all these kinds of composition. I have written one hundred and fifty lines, and am surprised to find the structure of that complicated stanza so little troublesome. I was always fond of it, for I think it the most harmonious that ever was contrived. It admits of more variety of pauses than either the couplet or the alternate rhyme; and it concludes with a pomp and majesty of sound, which, to my ear, is wonderfully delightful. It seems also very well adapted to the genius of our language, which, from its irregularity of inflexion and number of monosyllables, abounds in diversified terminations, and consequently renders our poetry susceptible of an endless variety of legitimate rhymes. But I am so far from intending this performance for the press, that I am morally certain it never will be finished. I shall add a stanza now and then when I am at leisure, and when I have no humour for any other amusement: but I am resolved to write no more poetry with a view to publication, till I see some dawnings of a poetical taste among the generality of readers, of which, however, there is not at present any thing like an appearance.

"My employment, and indeed my inclination, leads me rather to prose composition; and in this way I have much to do. The doctrines commonly comprehended under the name of moral philosophy are at present over-run with metaphysics, a luxuriant and tenacious weed, which seldom fails to choak and extirpate the wholesome plants, which it was perhaps intended to support and shelter. To this literary weed I have an insuperable aversion,

which becomes stronger and stronger, in proportion as I grow more and more acquainted with its nature, and qualities, and fruits. It is very agreeable to the paradoxical and licentious spirit of the age; but I am thoroughly convinced that it is fatal to true science, an enemy to the fine arts, destructive of genuine sentiment, and prejudicial to the virtue and happiness of mankind. There is a little ode of yours on the refinements of metaphysical philosophy, which I often read with peculiar satisfaction, and with high approbation of your spirit and sentiments.

" You, who would be truly wise,
" To Nature's light unveil your eyes,
" Her gentle call obey:
" She leads by no false wandering glare,
" No voice ambiguous strikes your ear,
" To bid you vainly stray.
" Not in the gloomy cell recluse,
" For noble deeds, or generous views,
" She bids us watch the night:
" Fair virtue shines to all display'd,
" Nor asks the tardy schoolman's aid,
" To teach us what is right.
" Pleasure and pain she sets in view,
" And which to shun, and which pursue,
" Instructs her pupil's heart.
" Then, letter'd pride! say, what thy gain,
" To mask with so much fruitless pain
" Thy ignorance with art?" —

Of the following letter, there is so much pleasant humour in the first part, so very unlike the admirable piece of criticism in the second, that the reader, I think, will thank me for thus exhibiting to him the versatility of Dr Beattie's powers of genius, which could pass at once from the most playful to the gravest style of epistolary correspondence.

Mr Boyd, to whom the letter is addressed, was the second son of the unfortunate Earl of Kilmarnock,* and brother of the Earl of

* Vide Appendix, [C.]

Erroll. Although he had not attached himself to any learned profession, he had received a literary education, and having resided long in France, he possessed a familiar acquaintance with the best writers of both countries. He was master too of no inconsiderable portion of humour, and had some turn for making verses; qualities which had the natural effect of producing a friendship and correspondence between him and Dr Beattie, that lasted till Mr Boyd's death at Edinburgh, 3d August, 1782.

LETTER XIV.

DR BEATTIE TO THE HONOURABLE CHARLES BOYD.

Aberdeen, 16th November, 1766.

" OF all the chagrins with which my present infirm state of health is attended, none afflicts me more than my inability to perform the duties of friendship. The offer which you were generously pleased to make me of your correspondence, flatters me extremely; but, alas! I have not as yet been able to avail myself of it. While the good weather continued, I strolled about the country, and made many strenuous attempts to run away from this odious giddiness; but the more I struggled, the more closely it seemed to stick by me. About a fortnight ago, the hurry of my winter business began; and at the same time my malady recurred with more violence than ever, rendering me at once incapable of reading, writing, and thinking. Luckily I am now a little better, so as to be able to read a page, and write a sentence or two, without stopping; which, I assure you, is a very great matter. My hopes and my spirits begin to revive once more. I flatter myself I shall soon get rid of this infirmity; nay, that I shall ere long be in the way of becoming a *great man*. For have I not head-achs, like Pope? vertigo, like Swift? grey hairs, like Homer? Do I not wear large shoes, (for fear of corns) like Virgil? and sometimes complain of sore eyes, (though not of *lippitude*) like Horace? Am I not at this present writing invested with a garment, not less ragged than that of Socrates? Like Joseph the patriarch, I am a mighty dreamer of

dreams; like Nimrod the hunter, I am an eminent builder of castles (in the air). I procrastinate, like Julius Cæsar; and very lately, in imitation of Don Quixotte, I rode a horse, lean, old, and lazy, like Rosinante. Sometimes, like Cicero, I write bad verses; and sometimes bad prose, like Virgil. This last instance I have on the authority of Seneca. I am of small stature, like Alexander the Great; I am somewhat inclinable to fatness, like Dr Arbuthnot and Aristotle; and I drink brandy and water, like Mr Boyd. I might compare myself, in relation to many other infirmities, to many other *great men;* but if fortune is not influenced in my favour, by the particulars already enumerated, I shall despair of ever recommending myself to her good graces. I once had some thought of soliciting her patronage on the score of my resembling great men in their good qualities; but I had so little to say on that subject, that I could not for my life furnish matter for one well-rounded period: and you know a short ill-turned speech is very improper to be used in an address to a female deity.

" Do not you think there is a sort of antipathy between philosophical and poetical genius? I question, whether any one person was ever eminent for both. Lucretius lays aside the poet when he assumes the philosopher, and the philosopher when he assumes the poet: In the one character he is truly excellent, in the other he is absolutely nonsensical. Hobbes was a tolerable metaphysician, but his poetry is the worst that ever was. Pope's " Essay on " Man" is the finest philosophical poem in the world; but it seems to me to do more honour to the imagination than to the understanding of its author: I mean, its sentiments are noble and affecting, its images and allusions apposite, beautiful, and new: its wit transcendently excellent; but the scientific part of it is very exceptionable. Whatever Pope borrows from Leibnitz, like most other metaphysical theories, is frivolous and unsatisfying: what Pope gives us of his own is energetic, irresistible, and divine. The incompatibility of philosophical and poetical genius is, I think, no unaccountable thing. Poetry exhibits the general qualities of a species; philosophy the particular qualities of individuals. *This* forms its conclusions from a painful and minute examination of single instances: *that* decides instantaneously, either from its own instinctive sagacity, or from a singular and unaccountable penetration, which at one glance sees all the instances which the philoso-

pher must leisurely and progressively scrutinize, one by one. This persuades you gradually, and by detail; the other overpowers you in an instant by a single effort. Observe the effect of argumentation in poetry; we have too many instances of it in Milton: it transforms the noblest thoughts into drawling inferences, and the most beautiful language into prose: it checks the tide of passion, by giving the mind a different employment in the comparison of ideas. A little philosophical acquaintance with the most beautiful parts of nature, both in the material and immaterial system, is of use to a poet, and gives grace and solidity to poetry; as may be seen in the "Georgics," "The Seasons," and "The Pleasures of "Imagination:" but this acquaintance, if it is any thing more than superficial, will do a poet rather harm than good: and will give his mind that turn for minute observation, which enfeebles the fancy by restraining it, and counteracts the native energy of judgment by rendering it fearful and suspicious."

LETTER XV.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 8th January, 1767.

"I THANK you for your excellent description of Mrs Montague;* I have heard much of that lady, and I admire her as an honour to her sex and to human nature. I am very happy to hear, that, from the favourable representations of my friends, she has done me the honour to think of me with approbation. I cannot flatter myself with the hope of ever having it in my power to let her know how much I esteem her; but I shall rejoice in the remembrance of having been in some little degree esteemed by her.

"The favourable reception you gave to my little poem,† demands my acknowledgments. I aimed at simplicity in the expres-

* This alludes to a letter which I had written to him, giving an account of a visit which Mrs Montague had paid to the late Dr Gregory in Edinburgh, in the autumn of 1766, and to which this letter of Dr Beattie's is in answer. He was not then personally known to Mrs Montague.

† "The Hermit."

sion, and something like uncommonness in the thought; and I own I am not ill pleased with it upon the whole; though I am sensible it does not answer the purpose for which I made it. I wrote it at the desire of a young lady of this country, who has a taste both for poetry and music, and wanted me to make words for a Scots tune called "Pentland hills," of which she is very fond. The verses correspond well enough with the measure and subject of the tune, but are extremely unsuitable for the purpose of a song.

"My broken health, and a hurry of other business, has for a long time interrupted my Italian studies, to my very great regret. However, within the last fortnight, I have read five or six of Metastasio's operas with much pleasure. We are apt to despise the Italian opera, and, perhaps, not altogether without reason; but I find the operas of Metastasio very far superior to what I expected. There is a sameness in the fables and character of this author; and yet he seems to me to have more of character in his drama than any other poet of this or the last age. A reader is generally interested in his pieces from beginning to end; for they are full of incident, and the incidents are often surprising and unexpected. He has a happy talent at heightening distress; and very seldom falls into that unmeaning rant and declamation which abounds so much on the French stage. In a word, I should not scruple to compare the modern Italian opera, as it appears in Metastasio, to the ancient Greek tragedy. The rigid observation of the unities of place and time, introduces many improprieties into the Greek drama, which are happily avoided by the less methodical genius of the Italian. I cannot indeed compare the little Italian songs, which are often very impertinent, as well as very silly, to the odes of the ancient tragedians: but a poet must always sacrifice something to the genius of his age. I dare say Metastasio despises those little *morçeaux* of sing-song; and it is evident from some of his performances in that way, that he is qualified to excel in the more solemn lyric style, if it were suitable to the taste of his countrymen. Some of his little songs are very pretty, and exhibit agreeable pictures of nature, with a brevity of description, and sweetness of style, that is hardly to be found in any other modern odes. I beg leave to mention as instances the songs in the 7th and 15th scenes of the second, and the 1st of the third act of "Artaserse." By the bye, the songs in this opera, as it is now adapted to the English stage, seem to be very ill translated.

"You will readily believe, that I rejoice to hear of Dr Gregory's success. I earnestly wish, for the honour of human nature, and for the good of society, that he may still be more and more sucessful. The reception his talents and his virtues have met with, gives me a better opinion of the present age than I should otherwise have had; and seems to prove that there is yet in the world something of a sense of virtue and regard to justice. I have just received a letter from him, which I will answer as soon as possible. Mr Arbuthnot and he will please to accept of my best wishes; may you live long happy in each other's society, and may I have the satisfaction to hear that you are so, and that you sometimes think of me with pleasure.

"There is a famous stanza in the 4th canto of Tasso's "Gieru-"salemme," which has often been quoted as an instance of the harmony of the Italian language.

"Chiama gli abitator de l'ombre eterne
"Il rauco suon de la tartarea tromba;
"Treman le spaciose atre caverne,
"E l'aer cieco a quel rumor rimbomba:
"Ne stridendo cosi da le superne
"Regioni del cielo il folgor piomba,
"Ne si scossa giamai trema la terra,
"Quando i vapori in sen gravida serva."

I attempted the other day, in a solitary walk, to turn this passage into English, and produced the following lines, which are as obstreperous at least as the original, but I am afraid not so agreeable.

"Forthwith to summon all the tribes of hell,
"The trump tartarean pour'd a thundering yell;
"Trembled th' unfathomable caverns round,
"And night's vast void rebellow'd to the sound:
"Far less the roar that rends th' ethereal world,
"When bolts of vengeance from on high are hurl'd;
"Far less the shock that heaves earth's tottering frame,
"When its torn entrails spout th' imprison'd flame."*

* In Dr Beattie's "Essay on Poetry and Music,"* he has given a somewhat different translation of this stanza.

"To call the tribes that roam the Stygian shores,
"The hoarse tartarean trump in thunder roars;

* "Essay on Poetry and Music," part ii. ch. ii. p. 570. 4to ed.

I have not Hoole at hand just now; Fairfax runs thus:

"The dreary trumpet blew a dreadful blast,
"And rumbled through the lands and kingdoms under;
"Through vastness wide it roared, and hollows vast,
"And filled the deep with horror, fear, and wonder,
"Not half so dreadful noise the tempest cast,
"That fall from skies with storms of hail and thunder;
"Not half so loud the whistling winds do sing,
"Broke from the earthen prisons of their king."

This is sonorous, but tautological, and not quite true to the original; Fairfax makes no mention of the earthquake, and introduces in the place of it what is really a bathos. Wind was never so loud as thunder."*

"Hell through her trembling caverns starts aghast,
"And night's black void rebellows to the blast:
"Far less the peal that rends th' ethereal world,
"When bolts of vengeance from on high are hurl'd;
"Far less the shock that heaves earth's tottering frame,
"When its torn entrails spout th' imprison'd flame.

* In order that the examination of the merit of Dr Beattie's translation of this famous stanza of Tasso may be the more complete, I set down here the lines as they stand in Hoole; which every reader of any taste will perceive to be flat and languid in the extreme, compared either with the original, or with Beattie's spirited version.

"The trumpet now, with hoarse-resounding breath,
"Convenes the spirits in the shades of death:
"The hollow caverns tremble at the sound;
"The air re-echoes to the noise around!
"Not louder terrors shake the distant pole,
"When through the skies the rattling thunders roll:
"Not greater tremors heave the lab'ring earth,
"When vapours, pent within, contend for birth.

LETTER XVI.

DR BEATTIE TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 2d March, 1767.

"I HAVE led a very retired life this winter; the condition of my health having prevented my going into company. By dint of regularity and attention, I flatter myself I have now established my health on a tolerable footing; for I have been better during the two last months than for a year before.

"My leisure hours, of which I have but few at this season, have been employed in reading Metastasio, an author whom I now understand pretty well, and of whom I am very fond. I have also finished my essay on—I know not well how to call it; for its present title-page, "*An Essay on Reason and Common Sense*," must be altered.

"Some persons, who wish well to me and to my principles, have expressed their wishes, in pretty strong terms, to see this essay in print. They say, I have set the sceptics in a new point of view, by treating them without any kind of reserve or deference; and that it might be of use to those who may be in danger from their doctrines, to consider them in the same light. However, I am far from being convinced that it would be proper to publish such a treatise; for the principles are quite unfashionable; and there is a keenness of expression in some passages, which could please only a few, namely, those who are thoroughly convinced of the truth and importance of religion. I shall be directed entirely by you and Dr Gregory, and my other friends at Edinburgh. At any rate, I do not repent my having written it; it has rivetted my conviction of the insignificance of metaphysics and scepticism: and I hope it will be of some use to the young people under my care; for whose principles (at least as far as they depend upon me) I hold myself accountable to my own conscience and the public."

In the following letter he gives a hint of his design of writing the "Minstrel."

LETTER XVII.

DR BEATTIE TO DR BLACKLOCK.

Aberdeen, 20th May, 1767.

"MY performance in Spenser's stanza has not advanced a single line these many months. It is called the "Minstrel." The subject was suggested by a dissertation on the old minstrels, which is prefixed to a collection of ballads lately published by Dodsley in three volumes. I propose to give an account of the birth, education, and adventures of one of those bards; in which I shall have full scope for description, sentiment, satire, and even a certain species of humour and of pathos, which, in the opinion of my great master, are by no means inconsistent, as is evident from his works. My hero is to be born in the south of Scotland; which you know was the native land of the English minstrels; I mean of those minstrels who travelled into England, and supported themselves there by singing their ballads to the harp. His father is a shepherd. The son will have a natural taste for music and the beauties of nature; which, however, languishes for want of culture, till in due time he meets with a hermit, who gives him some instruction; but endeavours to check his genius for poetry and adventures, by representing the happiness of obscurity and solitude, and the bad reception which poetry has met with in almost every age. The poor swain acquiesces in this advice, and resolves to follow his father's employment; when, on a sudden, the country is invaded by the Danes or English borderers, (I know not which) and he is stript of all his little fortune, and obliged by necessity to commence minstrel. This is all that I have as yet concerted of the plan. I have written 150 lines, but my hero is not yet born, though now in a fair way of being so, for his parents are described and married. I know not whether I shall ever proceed any farther: however, I am not dissatisfied with what I have written."

In perusing the following and some subsequent letters of Dr Gregory's, the reader of this day cannot but be struck with some

surprise at the picture which Dr. Gregory draws of the scepticism of the times in which he wrote. When Dr Beattie harangues against the alarming progress of infidelity, there are some readers who may believe his declamations to be those of a recluse, uttered from within the walls of his college, by a person totally unacquainted with life and manners. But this cannot be said of Dr Gregory, who was a man of the world, of extensive observation, and who, by living much in society, with men of all principles and of all parties, had the best opportunities of knowing the spirit and temper of the times. I know not the person, therefore, of all my acquaintance, on whom I should more fully rely for a faithful report of the prevailing opinions of his day. Yet I would gladly flatter myself, that even Dr Gregory, with all his penetration, may, in this case, have been somewhat mistaken; and that his own ardent zeal for the cause of revelation may have too easily taken the alarm, where he found any tendency towards the growth of scepticism. It will be observed, too, with what nice discrimination Dr Gregory marks the character of those pretenders to science, who most probably having never read, and most certainly not understanding, the writings which they affected so much to admire, had blindly adopted the language of those bold spirits, who rested their pretensions to the character of men of superior genius on the paradoxes they maintained; and their daring attack on principles that had been held by the best and wisest of men, as essential to the truest interests of human society.

But whatever may have been the character of the preceding age, I am happy to think, that the same features do not belong to the present; and I rejoice to have witnessed in this case an instance of that beautiful order of Providence, by which evil is made to administer to its own remedy. The sceptical conclusions of Mr Hume's philosophy excited an attention which might not otherwise have been bestowed upon it, and stimulated the friends of religion and of science to inquire into the foundations upon which it was built. It was this inquiry which first produced the "Essay on "Truth," in which its sophistry was exposed to the conviction of men of reflection, and its consequences to human conduct and happiness unfolded to the apprehension of the most thoughtless. It was this which afterwards produced the great work of Dr Reed,* in

* "Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man."

which its errors were traced to their source, and the mighty fabric of modern scepticism shown at last to rest upon some of those weak hypotheses which usually disgrace the infancy of science.

LETTER XIX.

DR JOHN GREGORY TO DR BEATTIE.

Edinburgh, 16th June, 1767.

"I HAVE been in daily expectation of seeing your papers, which you said some time ago you would send me. Pray, what is become of them? By the accounts Mr Williamson gave me of them, I am sure they will be much to my taste. I am well convinced that the great deference paid to our modern heathens has been productive of the worst effects. Young people are impressed with an idea of their being men of superior abilities, whose genius has raised them above vulgar prejudices, and who have spirit enough to avow openly their contempt of them. Atheism and materialism are the present fashion. If one speak with warmth of an infinitely wise and good Being, who sustains and directs the frame of nature, or expresses his steady belief of a future state of existence, he gets hints of his having either a very weak understanding, or of being a very great hypocrite. Christianity seems to be now thought even below these gentlemen's ridicule, as I never almost hear a sneer against it. There is an insolence and a daring effrontery in this which is extremely provoking. But what hurts me most is the emphatic silence of those who should be supposed to hold very different sentiments on these subjects. The world supposes that no man will tamely hear sentiments ridiculed which he holds as the most deeply interesting and sacred, without expressing such dissatisfaction as would effectually prevent any gentleman of tolerable good breeding from repeating the insult, or at least, that he would endeavour to retort the ridicule, if he was not conscious of the weakness of his cause. Till within these thirty years, the wit was generally on the side of religion. I do not remember any man of the least pretensions to genius in Britain, who ever thought of subverting every principle of natural religion till of late. And if the present spirit is not very speedily checked, I am confi-

dent it will give the finishing stroke to that corruption of heart and principles which makes such an alarming progress. It is not worth while to say, after this, that it will as certainly and speedily suppress all great efforts of genius and imagination. You are the best man I know to chastise these people as they deserve. You have more philosophy and more wit than will be necessary for the purpose, though you can never employ any of them in so good a cause."

On the 28th June, 1767, Dr Beattie was married at Aberdeen, to Miss Mary Dun, the only daughter of Dr James Dun, rector of the grammar school there. From the period of his establishment at Aberdeen, he had naturally been much connected in social intercourse with Dr Dun's family. His daughter was a few years younger than Dr Beattie; she was tolerably handsome, and lively in conversation, sung a little, and accompanied her voice with the harpsichord. As these were accomplishments exactly suited to the taste of Dr Beattie, whose heart was full of sensibility, no wonder, that what was at first the ordinary interchange of civility, grew into a strong and mutual attachment. When, therefore, Dr Beattie found himself in a situation in which he had the reasonable prospect of being able to maintain a wife and family, he naturally wished, like every virtuous man, to marry; and he thought himself more than commonly fortunate, in having met, in Miss Dun, with a mate so exactly suited to his taste, with whom he hoped for that measure of happiness, which the married state, when wisely engaged in, is, of all other states, the best calculated to insure.

This connexion, however, from which he augured such lasting felicity, unfortunately proved to him the source of the deepest sorrow; Mrs Beattie, having inherited from her mother that most dreadful of all human evils, a distempered mind, which, although it did not, for a considerable time, break out into open insanity, yet, in a few years after their marriage, showed itself in caprices that embittered every hour of his life, till, at last, it unquestionably contributed to bring him to his grave.

The following letter is curious, as it gives us his sentiments of some of Rousseau's works at a very early period.

Of that celebrated philosopher, and his writings, Dr Beattie has since given an elaborate and masterly character in a long note in the "Essay on Truth," Part III. ch. ii. p. 291. 4to edit.

LETTER XX.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. MR JAMES WILLIAMSON.*

Aberdeen, 22d October, 1767.

"I HAVE been studying Rousseau's miscellanies of late. His "Epistle to D'Alembert," on theatrical exhibitions, I think excellent, and perfectly decisive. His discourse on the effects of the sciences is spirited to a high degree, and contains much matter of melancholy meditation. I am not so much of his mind in regard to the origin of inequality among mankind, though I think the piece on this subject has been much misunderstood by critics, and misrepresented by wits. Even by his own confession, it is rather a jeu d'esprit than a philosophical inquiry; for he owns that the natural state, such as he represents it, did probably never take place, and probably never will; and if it had taken place, he seems to think it impossible that mankind should ever have emerged from it without some very extraordinary alteration in the course of nature. Farther, he says, that this natural state is not the most advantageous for man; for that the most delightful sentiments of the human mind could not exert themselves till man had relinquished his brutal and solitary nature, and become a domestic animal. At this period, and previous to the establishment of property, he places the age most favourable to human happiness; which is just what the poets have done before him, in their description of the golden age. So that his system is not that preposterous thing it has been represented. Yet he says many things in this treatise to which I cannot agree. His solitary and savage man is too much of a

* Mr Williamson had been his pupil, and had gained his friendship. That gentleman went afterwards to Oxford, where he became a fellow of Hertford College, and distinguished himself by his skill in mathematics. He published a "Commentary on Euclid's Elements," also an "Argument in favour of Christianity," and now holds the living of Plumtree, near Nottingham.

misrepresentations of matters of fact, unacquainted with the human heart, ignorant even of their own principles, the dupes of verbal ambiguities, and the votaries of frivolous, though dangerous philosophy, I shall do some little service to the cause of truth; and all this I will undertake to prove in many instances of high importance.

"You have no doubt seen Dr Blacklock's new book.* I was very much surprised to see my name prefixed to the dedication, as he never had given me the least intimation of such a design. His friendship does me great honour. I should be sorry, if, in this instance, it has got the better of his prudence; and I have some reason to fear, that my name will be no recommendation to the work, at least in this place, where, however, the book is very well spoken of, by some who have read it. I should like to know how it takes at Edinburgh.

LETTER XXIII.

DR BEATTIE TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 25th February, 1768.

"I INTENDED long ago to write to you; but several pieces of business, some of them unexpected, have, from time to time, prevented me. The writing out a copy of Mr Gray's poems for the press has employed me the last fortnight. They are to be printed at Glasgow by Foulis, with the author's own permission, which I solicited and obtained: and he sent me four folio pages of notes and additions to be inserted in the new edition. The notes are chiefly illustrations of the two Pindaric odes, more copious indeed than I should have thought necessary: but I understand he is not a little chagrined at the complaints which have been made of their obscurity; and he tells me, that he wrote these notes out of spite. "The long Story" is left out in this edition, at which I am not well pleased: for, though it has neither head nor tail, beginning nor end, it abounds in humorous description, and the versification is exquisitely fine. Three new poems (never before

* "Paraclesis, or Consolations."

printed) are inserted: two of which are imitations from the Norwegian, and one is an imitation from the Welch. He versified them (he says) "because there is a wild spirit in them which "struck him." From the first of the Norwegian pieces he has taken the hint of the *web*, in the ode on the Welch bards; but the imitation far exceeds the original. The original in his version begins in this manner:

"Now the storm begins to lower;
"Haste, the loom of hell prepare:
"Iron sleet of arrowy shower
"Hurtles in the darken'd air.
"See the grisly texture grow;
"'Tis of human entrails made;
"And the weights that play below,
"Each a gasping warrior's head.
"Shafts, for shuttles, dipt in gore,
"Shoot the trembling cords along;
"Sword, that once a monarch bore,
"Keep the tissue close and strong."

"The second Norwegian piece, is a dialogue between Odin and a propheteſs in her grave, whom, by incantation, he makes to speak. One of the most remarkable passages in it is the following description of a dog, which far exceeds every thing of the kind I have seen.

"Him the dog of darkness spied,
"His shaggy throat he opened wide,
"While from his jaws, with carnage fill'd,
"Foam and human gore distill'd.
"Hoarse he bays with hideous din,
"Eyes that glow, and fangs that grin;
"And long pursues, with fruitless yell,
"The father of the powerful spell."

"I give you these passages, partly to satisfy, and partly to raise, your curiosity. I expect the book will be out in a few weeks, if Foulis be diligent, which it is his interest to be, as there is another edition of the same just now printing by Dodsley. I gave him notice of this, by Mr Gray's desire, two months ago; but it did not in the least abate his zeal for the undertaking."

The following note to his friend Mr Tytler, accompanying the beautiful little poem "The Hermit," has no date, but was probably written in the year 1767, at the time he was in Edinburgh. The poem itself was written in the year 1766, as he mentions it in his letter to me, 8th January 1767, as a late production of his muse, and the occasion of it. It was a very flattering compliment to Mr Tytler, who had composed the tune of "Pentland Hills," which the words were to accompany, in imitation of our ancient Scottish melodies, of which he was an enthusiastic admirer. For some account of Mr Tytler, whom I had the happiness to rank among the number of my intimate and most respected friends, see the Appendix, [O.]

LETTER XXIV.

DR BEATTIE TO WILLIAM TYTLER, ESQ. OF WOODHOUSELEE.

Edinburgh, Thursday, Noon.

"THE above is a copy of the verses I wrote for your tune of "Pentland Hills." The sentiments, I fear, are not such as become a song; but the measure corresponds well enough with the music. I shall be glad to know your sentiments of this performance."

The following letter to his sister strongly marks the strength of Dr Beattie's filial affection.

LETTER XXV.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS VALENTINE.

Aberdeen, 27th March, 1768.

"FOR some weeks past, I have been wishing to have it in my power to write to you my opinion concerning the way in which our mother's affairs are to be settled. The death of our two sis-

ters * has produced a great alteration in her circumstances, and will, I am afraid, serve to render the remainder of her life more melancholy than could be wished. We ought, however, to endeavour, as much as possible, to prevent this, and to settle her in as comfortable a situation as we can.

"Of the state of her affairs, as they are at present, and as they have been for three or four years past, I am almost wholly ignorant; and out of tenderness to my sister, I did not care to make too particular an enquiry. But matters are now come to that pass, that there is a necessity for doing something. I have written to my mother and brother to this purpose: but every thing I now write is but guess-work: for I have got no particular account either of my mother's circumstances, or of what she would wish to have done; and this is the reason I did not write to you sooner. I wrote to my brother, desiring some information on this head. My mother's inclinations ought to be consulted in the first place. Whatever way of life is most agreeable to her, shall be so to me. But till I know her inclinations, I can say nothing. On my part, nothing shall be wanting to render her old age as comfortable as possible."

LETTER XXVI.

DR BEATTIE TO DR BLACKLOCK,

Aberdeen, 1st July, 1768.

"I HAVE at last found an opportunity of sending you the Scottish poems which I mentioned in a former letter.† The dialect is so licentious (I mean it is so different from that of the south country, which is acknowledged the standard of broad Scotch), that I am afraid you will be at a loss to understand it in many places. However, if you can overlook this inconvenience; together with the tediousness of some passages, and the absurdity of others, I

* Who had lived with her.

† The "Fortunate Shepherdess," and other poems in the broad Scots dialect, published at Aberdeen, in 1768, by Alexander Ross of Lochlee.

doubt not but you will receive some amusement from the perusal. The author excels most in describing the solitary scenes of a mountainous country, and the manners and conversation of the lowest sort of our people. Whenever he attempts to step out of this sphere, he becomes absurd. This sphere is indeed the only one of which he has had any experience. He has been for these forty years a schoolmaster in one of the most sequestered parishes in the Highlands of Scotland, where he had no access either to company or books that could improve him. His circumstances and employment confine him at home the whole year long; so that his compositions, with all their imperfections, are really surprising. My personal acquaintance with him began only two years ago, when he had occasion to come to this town, on some urgent business. He is a good-humoured, social, happy old man; modest without clownishness, and lively without petulance. He put into my hands a great number of manuscripts in verse, chiefly on religious subjects: I believe Sir Richard Blackmore himself is not a more voluminous author. The poems now published seemed to me the best of the whole collection: indeed many of the others would hardly bear a reading. He told me he had never written a single line with a view to publication; but only to amuse a solitary hour. Some gentlemen in this country set on foot a subscription for his Scottish poems, in consequence of which they were printed, and he will clear by the publication about twenty pounds, a sum far exceeding his most sanguine expectations; for I believe he would thankfully have sold his whole works for five. In order to excite some curiosity about his work, I wrote some verses in the dialect of this country, which, together with an introductory letter in English prose, were published in the Aberdeen Journal;* and the bookseller tells me, he has sold about thirty copies since they appeared. I have sent you inclosed a copy of the verses, with a glossary of the hardest words. Having never before attempted to write any thing in this way, I thought I could not have done it, and was not a little surprised to find it so easy. However, I fear I have exhausted my whole stock of Scottish words in these few lines; for I endeavoured to make the style as broad as possible, that it might be the better adapted to the taste of those whose curiosity I wished

* Vide Appendix, [P.]

to raise. You will observe, that Mr Ross is peculiarly unfortunate in his choice of proper names. One of his heroes is called by a woman's name, Rosalind. The injurious mountaineers he called *Sevitians*, with a view no doubt to express their cruelty; but the printer, not understanding Latin, has changed it into *Sevilians*. The whole is incorrectly printed.

"The following epigram has some merit. It is said to have been written by Voltaire; but this I doubt. I have subjoined a translation, of which I only wrote the first five lines. The three last are by Mr Charles Boyd, Lord Erroll's brother.

Epitaphe sur le Roi de Prusse.

"Ce mortel profana tous les talens divers,
"Il charma les humains qui furent ses victimes,
"Barbare en action, et philosophe en vers,
"Il chanta les vertus, et commit tous les crimes.
"Hai du Dieu d'Amour, cher au Dieu de Combats,
"Il bagna dans le sang l'Europe et la patrie,
"Cent mille hommes par lui reçurent le trepas,
"Et pas un n'en reçut la vie."

"He every human talent misemployed,
"And men at once delighted and destroyed;
"Savage in action, but a sage in rhyme,
"Each virtue sung, and practised every crime;
"The scorn of Venus, but of Mars the pride,
"He filled his country and the world with strife,
"Thousands for him in honour's bed have died,
"But from his own not one e'er sprung to life."

LETTER XXVII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 18th September, 1768.

"YOU mention the new edition of Mr Gray's poems. It came out some months ago; and is, I think, one of the most elegant pieces of printing that the Glasgow press, or any other press,

has ever produced. It does honour to every person concerned in it; to Mr Foulis the printer, and even to me the publisher, as well as to the author. The additional pieces, though not of so much consequence as his other poems, have every kind of merit of which they are susceptible; strength, elegance, and perspicuity of style, and exquisite harmony of numbers. But you have certainly seen them, and therefore I need not say more about them."

LETTER XXVIII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE HONOURABLE CHARLES BOYD.*

"I PROMISED to give you my opinion of the "Henriade;" but I must premise, that I take it for granted you have not implicitly adopted the notions of the French critics with regard to this poem. I hear it is accounted by them the greatest poem, that ever human wit produced in any age or nation. For my part, I judge of it without prejudice either for or against it, and as I would judge of Tasso's "Gerusalemme," or any other work, in whose fate I have no national concern.

"Among the beauties of this work I would reckon its style, which, though raised above prose as much as the genius of the language will permit, is yet elegant and simple, though sometimes, to one accustomed to English poetry, it may have the appearance of being too prosaic. "Ou plûtot en effet Valois ne regnait plus" —"Henri sçait prôfiter de ce grand advantage"—"C'est un usage "antique et sacre parmi nous"—"De Paris à l'instant il fait ouvrir "la porte"—and many others, have nothing to distinguish them from the flattest prose but the measure and rhyme. But I do not insist on this as a fault; for the same objection might be made to the finest poems in the world; and I know not whether a flatness of this kind may not sometimes have a good effect, and heighten, as it were, the relief of the more distinguished parts. The versi-

* This letter has no date, but was probably written in the year 1767, as he speaks of the translation of Tasso as being recently finished. See letter XV.

fication of the "Henriade" is agreeable, and often more harmonious than one could expect, who has not a greater niceness of ear in regard to the French numbers than I can pretend to have. I know not whence it happens, that I, who am very sensible of the Greek, Latin, and Italian harmony, can never bring myself to relish that of the French, although I understand the French language, as well as any of the others. Is it true, as Rousseau asserts, that this language, on account of the incessant monotony of the pronunciation, is incapable of harmony? I should like to have your sentiments on this subject.

"The thoughts or reflections in this poem are not too much crowded, nor affectedly introduced; they are, in general, proper and nervous, frequently uncommons. The author evidently appears to be a man of wit, yet he does not seem to take any pains to appear so. The fable is distinct, perspicuous, and intelligible; the character of Henry historically just; and the description of particular objects apposite, and sometimes picturesque.

"But his descriptions are often of too general a nature, and want that minuteness which is necessary to interest a reader. They are rather historical than poetical description. This is no verbal distinction; there is real ground for it. An historian may describe from hearsay; a poet must describe from seeing and experience; and this he is enabled to do by making use of the eye of imagination. What makes a description natural? It is such a selection of particular qualities as we think that we ourselves would have made, if we had been spectators of the object. What makes a description picturesque? It is a selection, not of every circumstance or quality, but of those which most powerfully attract the notice and influence the affections and imagination of the spectator. In a word, a poet must, either in vision or reality, be a spectator of the objects he undertakes to describe: an historian (being confined to truth) is generally supposed to describe from hearsay; or, if he describe what he has seen, he is not at liberty to insert one circumstance, and omit another, magnify this, and diminish that, bring one forward, and throw the other into the back ground; he must give a detail of all the circumstances, as far as he knows them, otherwise he is not a faithful historian. Now, I think, through the whole of this poem, Voltaire shows himself more of a historian than a poet; we under-

stand well enough what he says, but his representations, for the most part, are neither picturesque nor affecting.

"To one who has read the second book of Virgil, Voltaire's *massacre of St Bartholomew* will appear very trifling. It is uninteresting and void of incident; the horrors of it arise only upon reflection; the imagination is not terrified, though the moral sense disapproves. The parting of Henry and Mad. D'Estrees is another passage that disappointed me; it is expressed in a few general terms, that produce no effect. The parting of Dido and Æneas, of Armida and Rinaldo, are incomparably fine, and do as far exceed that of Henry and his paramour, as the thunder of heaven transcends the mustard-bowl of the playhouse.

"There is hardly an attempt at character in the poem. That of Henry is purely historical; and, though well enough supported on the whole, is not placed in those difficult and trying circumstances, which draw forth into action the minuter springs of the soul. Before I get to the end of the Iliad, I am as much acquainted with Homer's heroes as if I had been personally known to them all for many years; but of Voltaire's hero I have only a confused notion. I know him to be brave and amorous, a lover of his country, and affectionate to his friends; and this is all I know of him, and I could have learned as much from a common newspaper.

"I acknowledge Voltaire's fable to be perspicuous, but I think it uninteresting, especially towards the end. We foresee the event, but our expectations are not raised by it. The catastrophe is not brought about by any striking incident, but by a series of incidents that have little or nothing in them to engage or surprise the reader. Henry's conversion is a very poor piece of work. Truth descends from heaven to the king's tent with a veil over her, which she removes by little and little, till at length her whole person appears in a glorious, but undazzling lustre. This may be good philosophy, but it is very indifferent poetry. It affects not the imagination, nor reconciles the reader to the event. Henry is converted, but we know not how or why. The catastrophe of Don Quixotte is similar to this. Both Cervantes and Voltaire seem to have been in a haste to conclude; and this is all the apology I can offer for them.

" I mention not Voltaire's confusion of fabulous and real personages in his machinery; this has been remarked by others. But I cannot help observing, that his invocation to the historic muse is extremely injudicious. It warns the reader to expect nothing but truth, and consequently every appearance of fiction in the sequel must produce a bad effect, and bear the mark of improbability, which it would not have borne if our author had been content to follow the example of his predecessors. Virgil pretends no better authority than tradition, *&it mihi fas audita loqui;* and Homer throws himself entirely upon his muse, and is satisfied in being the instrument through which she speaks. The dream in the seventh canto (which the French critics think superior in merit to the whole Iliad) disappointed me much, though, in some few passages, it is not amiss. But heaven is not the element of poets. St Louis's prayer, in the last canto, is an odd one. He treats his Maker very cavalierly, and almost threatens him. I observed in the " Henriade" some mixed and improper metaphors, but did not mark them. One, however, occurs—" L'Eternel a ses voeux " se laissa *penetrer*." On the whole, I am very much of Denina's mind with regard to this poem.—" Se nell' Enriade non si trovano " molti passaggi pieni di affetti, nè molte orazioni forti e gagliarde, e che esprimano il carattere di chi parla, nè quella ubertà " d'imagini e di tratti vivi e sorprendenti d'immaginazione, come " in Omero, Virgilio, Ariosto, Tasso e Milton, non vi son neppure " le superfluità, nè le stravaganze che in alcuni di questi si notano; " e chicchessia può con gusto, e soddisfazione leggere l'Enriade " senza saziarsi; vantaggio, che l'autore dee riconoscere dalla " vivacità e forza del suo stile, e dall' energia de' suoi versi."

" Reserve is the bane of friendly intercourse, the screen of error, and the support of prejudice. I have, therefore, spoken freely on this occasion, because I would willingly embrace every opportunity of rectifying my errors, and putting myself in the way of information. If you approve of my sentiments, I shall believe them right; if not, I shall carefully review and correct them. I flatter myself I am of no country, but a citizen of the world. I have received much entertainment from the works of Voltaire; but I do not admire him much in his critical capacity. I know Mrs Boyd will support me in this; for she understands and admires Shakespeare, who seems to be the object of Voltaire's envy in a particular degree.

" The following lines from Tasso have often been quoted as an instance of the unrivalled harmony of the Italian language.

" Chiama gli abitator dell' ombre eterne," &c.

" I quote these lines, that I may have an opportunity of giving you a translation of them, which I made a few days ago. I think I am as obstreperous as my original, but not so musical.

" Forthwith to summon all the tribes of hell,"* &c.

" Here is another *morçeau*, written lately in imitation of the Italian. I attempted this, because I was dissatisfied with the common translation of it, which is given by the person who adapted " Artaxerxes " to the English stage.

" L'onda dal mar divisa
" Bagna la valle, e 'l monte,
" Va passaggiera
" In fiume,
" Va prigioniera
" In fonte;
" Mormora sempre, e geme,
" Fin che non torna al mar:
" Al mar, dov' ella nacque,
" Dove acquistò gli umori,
" Dove da' lunghi errori
" Spera di riposar."

Metastasio Artaserse, Att. 3. *Se.* 1.

" Waters, from the ocean borne,
" Bathe the valley and the hill,
" Prison'd in the fountain mourn,
" Warble down the winding rill;
" But, wherever doom'd to stray,
" Still they murmur and complain,
" Still pursue their lingering way,
" Till they join their native main.
" After many a year of woe,
" Many a long, long wandering past,
" Where, at first, they learn'd to flow,
" There they hope to rest at last.

* Both the original and the translation of this stanza will be found at p. 68, 69.

" I confined myself to the measure of the old translation, because I wanted that my words should agree with the music, which, in this song, is very good.

" The following letter gives a very interesting account of Dr Beattie's motives for writing and publishing his " Essay on " Truth."

LETTER XXIX.

DR BEATTIE TO DR BLACKLOCK.

Aberdeen, 9th January, 1769.

" IT was very kind in you to read over my " Essay on the " Immutability of Moral Sentiment," with so much attention. I wish it deserved any part of the high encomium you have bestowed on it. I flatter myself it will receive considerable improvements from a second transcribing, which I intend to begin as soon as I can. Some parts of it will be enlarged, and others (perhaps) shortened: the examples from history, and authorities from ancient authors, will be more numerous; it will be regularly distributed into chapters and sections, and the language will be corrected throughout. The first part, which treats of the permanency of truth in general, is now in great forwardness; ninety pages in quarto are finished, and materials provided for as many more. The design of the whole you will guess from the part you have seen. It is to overthrow scepticism, and establish conviction in its place; a conviction not in the least favourable to bigotry or prejudice, far less to a persecuting spirit; but such a conviction as produces firmness of mind, and stability of principle, in a consistence with moderation, candour, and liberal inquiry. If I understand my own design, it is certainly this; whether I shall accomplish this design or not, the event only will determine. Meantime I go on with cheerfulness in this intricate and fatiguing study, because I would fain hope that it may do some good; harm I think it cannot possibly do any.

"Perhaps you are anxious to know what first induced me to write on this subject; I will tell you as briefly as I can. In my younger days I read chiefly for the sake of amusement, and I found myself best amused with the classics, and what we call the *belles lettres*. Metaphysics I disliked; mathematics pleased me better; but I found my mind neither improved nor gratified by that study. When Providence allotted me my present station, it became incumbent on me to read what had been written on the subject of morals and human nature: the works of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, were celebrated as masterpieces in this way; to them, therefore, I had recourse. But as I began to study them with great prejudices in their favour, you will readily conceive how strangely I was surprised to find them, as I thought, replete with absurdities: I pondered these absurdities; I weighed the arguments, with which I was sometimes not a little confounded; and the result was, that I began at last to suspect my own understanding, and to think that I had not capacity for such a study. For I could not conceive it possible that the absurdities of these authors were so great as they seemed to me to be; otherwise, thought I, the world would never admire them so much. About this time some excellent antisceptical works made their appearance, particularly Reid's "Inquiry "into the Human Mind." Then it was that I began to have a little more confidence in my own judgment, when I found it confirmed by those of whose abilities I did not entertain the least distrust. I reviewed my authors again, with a very different temper of mind. A very little truth will sometimes enlighten a vast extent of science. I found that the sceptical philosophy was not what the world imagined it to be, nor what I, following the opinion of the world, had hitherto imagined it to be, but a frivolous, though dangerous, system of verbal subtilty, which it required neither genius, nor learning, nor taste, nor knowledge of mankind, to be able to put together; but only a captious temper, an irreligious spirit, a moderate command of words, and an extraordinary degree of vanity and presumption. You will easily perceive that I am speaking of this philosophy only in its most extravagant state, that is, as it appears in the works of Mr Hume. The more I study it, the more am I confirmed in this opinion. But while I applauded and admired the sagacity of those who had led me into, or at least encouraged me to proceed in, this train of thinking, I was not altogether

satisfied with them in another respect. I could not approve that extraordinary adulation which some of them paid to their arch-adversary. I could not conceive the propriety of paying compliments to a man's *heart*, at the very time one is proving that his aim is to subvert the principles of truth, virtue, and religion; nor to his *understanding*, when we are charging him with publishing the grossest and most contemptible nonsense. I thought I then foresaw, what I have since found to happen, that this controversy would be looked upon rather as a trial of skill between two logicians, than as a disquisition in which the best interests of mankind were concerned; and that the world, especially the fashionable part of it, would still be disposed to pay the greatest deference to the opinions of him who, even by the acknowledgment of his antagonists, was confessed to be the best philosopher and the soundest reasoner. All this has happened, and more. Some, to my certain knowledge, have said, that Mr Hume and his adversaries did really act in concert, in order mutually to promote the sale of one another's works; as a proof of which they mention not only the extravagant compliments that pass between them, but also the circumstance of Dr R.* and Dr C.† sending their manuscripts to be perused and corrected by Mr Hume before they gave them to the press. I, who know both the men, am very sensible of the gross falsehood of these reports. As to the affair of the manuscripts, it was, I am convinced, candour and modesty that induced them to it. But the world knows no such thing; and, therefore, may be excused for mistaking the meaning of actions that have really an equivocal appearance. I know likewise that they are sincere, not only in the detestation they express for Mr Hume's irreligious tenets, but also in the compliments they have paid to his talents; for they both look upon him as an extraordinary genius, a point in which I cannot agree with them. But while I thus vindicate them from imputations, which the world from its ignorance of circumstances has laid to their charge, I cannot approve them in every thing; I wish they had carried their researches a little farther, and expressed themselves with a little more firmness and spirit. For well I know, that their works, for want of this, will never produce that effect which (if all mankind were cool metaphysical reasoners)

* Dr Reid. † Dr Campbell.

might be expected from them. There is another thing in which my judgment differs considerably from that of the gentlemen just mentioned. They have great metaphysical abilities; and they love the metaphysical sciences. I do not. I am convinced that this metaphysical spirit is the bane of true learning, true taste, and true science; that to it we owe all this modern scepticism and atheism; that it has a bad effect upon the human faculties, and tends not a little to sour the temper, to subvert good principles, and to disqualify men for the business of life. You will now see wherein my views differ from those of the other answerers of Mr Hume. I want to show the world, that the sceptical philosophy is contradictory to itself, and destructive of genuine philosophy, as well as of religion and virtue; that it is in its own nature so paltry a thing, (however it may have been celebrated by some) that to be despised it needs only to be known; that no degree of genius is necessary to qualify a man for making a figure in this pretended science; but rather a certain minuteness and suspiciousness of mind, and want of sensibility, the very reverse of true intellectual excellence; that metaphysics cannot possibly do any good, but may do, and actually have done, much harm; that sceptical philosophers, whatever they may pretend, are the corrupters of science, the pests of society, and the enemies of mankind. I want to show, that the same method of reasoning which these people have adopted in their books, if transferred into common life, would show them to be destitute of common sense; that true philosophers follow a different method of reasoning; and that, without following a different method, no truth can be discovered. I want to lay before the public, in as strong a light as possible, the following dilemma: our sceptics either believe the doctrines they publish, or they do not believe them; if they believe them, they are fools—if not, they are a thousand times worse. I want also to fortify the mind against this sceptical poison, and to propose certain criteria of moral truth, by which some of the most dangerous sceptical errors may be detected and guarded against.

"You are sensible, that, in order to attain these ends, it is absolutely necessary for me to use great plainness of speech. My expressions must not be so tame as to seem to imply either a diffidence in my principles, or a coldness towards the cause I have undertaken to defend. And where is the man who can blame me

for speaking from the heart, and therefore speaking with warmth, when I appear in the cause of truth, religion, virtue, and mankind? I am sure, my dear friend Dr Blacklock will not; he, who has set before me so many examples of this laudable ardour; he, whose style I should be proud to take for my model, if I were not aware of the difficulty, I may say the insuperable difficulty, of imitating it with success. You need not fear, however, that I expose myself by an excess of passion or petulance. I hope I shall be animated, without losing my temper, and keen, without injury to good manners. In a word, I will be as soft and delicate as the subject and my conscience will allow. One gentleman, a friend of yours,* I shall have occasion to treat with much freedom. I have heard of his virtues. I know he has many virtues; God forbid I should ever seek to lessen them, or wish them to be found insincere; I hope they are sincere, and that they will increase in number and merit every day. To his virtues I shall do justice; but I must also do justice to his faults, at least to those faults which are public, and which, for the sake of truth and of mankind, ought not to be concealed or disguised. Personal reflections will be carefully avoided; I hope I am in no danger of falling into them, for I bear no personal animosity against any man whatsoever; sometimes I may perhaps be keen; but I trust I shall never depart from the Christian and philosophic character.

"A scheme like this of mine cannot be popular, far less can it be lucrative. It will raise me enemies, it will expose me to the scrutiny of the most rigid criticism, it will make me be considered by many as a sullen and illiberal bigot. I trust, however, in Providence, and in the goodness of my cause, that my attempts in behalf of truth shall not be altogether ineffectual, and that my labours shall be attended with some utility to my fellow-creatures. This,

* The gentleman here alluded to by Dr Beattie, as a friend of Dr Blacklock's, was Mr Hume, who had patronised Dr Blacklock at an early period, and done him several acts of kindness, which Dr Blacklock never failed to acknowledge. But all intercourse between Mr Hume and him had ceased (through no fault on the part of Dr Blacklock) many years before the period here spoken of. In consequence of what Dr Beattie says here, of Mr Hume's being a friend of Dr Blacklock's, I find among Dr Beattie's papers a long letter to him from Dr Blacklock, giving a detail of the whole of the intercourse between him and Mr Hume, from its commencement to its close.

in my estimation, will do much more than counterbalance all the inconveniences I have any reason to apprehend. I have already fallen on evil tongues (as Milton says), on account of this intended publication. It has been reported, that I had written a most scurrilous paper against Mr Hume, and was preparing to publish it, when a friend of mine interposed, and, with very great difficulty, prevailed on me to suppress it, because he knew it would hurt or ruin my character. Such is the treatment I have to expect from one set of people. I was so provoked when I first heard this calumny, that I deliberated whether I should not throw my papers into the fire, with a *Si populus vult decipi, decipiatur:* but I rejected that thought; for so many persons have told me, that it was my *duty* to publish these papers, that I almost begin to think so myself. Many have urged me to publish them; none ever dissuaded me. The gentleman, named in the report, read the essay, and returned it with the highest commendations; but I do not recollect that he ever spoke a syllable about publishing or suppressing it. But I have certainly tired you with so long a detail, about so trifling a matter as my works. However, I thought it necessary to say something by way of apology for them, for I find that your good opinion is of too much consequence to my peace, to suffer me to neglect any opportunity of cultivating it.

"I informed you, in the letter which I sent by Mr John Ross, that I was become the father of a son. Both his parents and he are much obliged to you for interesting yourself so much in that event, and for your kind wishes. He thrives apace, and my wife is thoroughly recovered. You ask me, what are my feelings? Perhaps I shall be in a better condition to answer that question afterwards than now. He is always near me, and never has had any illness; and you know, that adversity is the only true touchstone of affection. I find my imagination recoils from the idea of such adversity as would bring my affection to the test. To tell the truth, I am at no great pains to obtrude that idea on my fancy; evils come soon enough, we need not anticipate them. At present, however, I feel enough to convince me experimentally of what I have proved from the principles of reason in my essay, that this στοργη is something entirely different from that affection we feel towards dependants, as well as from that which arises from a habit of long acquaintance.

"I long much to see your translation of the French poem ;* pray send it as soon as you can. You need not, I think, be under any apprehensions of meeting with Mr Home's treatment.† To translate a dramatic poem can never be made to be on a footing with composing one, and bringing it on the stage. Even Presbyterianism itself allows us to read plays ; and if so, it cannot prohibit the translating of them."

In the following letter, Dr Beattie alludes to an inscription, which I had written for a monument I was about to erect to the memory of my father, and which I wished him to take the trouble of correcting. I trust no one will object to me this piece of egotism, at least, in honour of a respected parent, to whose memory I wished Dr Beattie to help me to inscribe some better memorial than I could pretend to prepare myself.

The inscription, as here given, has since been engraved on a monument of white marble, erected in the church of Kearn in Aberdeenshire, the burial-place of Lord Forbes's family, where my father's remains were deposited.

LETTER XXX.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 19th April, 1769.

***** "THE Christian religion, according to my creed, is a very simple thing, intelligible to the meanest capacity, and what,

* The French poem, here spoken of, was a translation of the play of "Cenie," by D'Happoncourt de Grafigny, which Dr Blacklock had translated, under the title of "Seraphina ;" but which was never intended to be printed, far less to be brought on the stage. In a letter to Dr Beattie, Dr Blacklock, speaking of this piece, says it had been imitated, rather than translated, by Mr Philip Francis, the translator of Horace, under the title of "Eugenia," but with not much better success than his own.

† This alludes to Mr John Home's tragedy of "Douglas."

if we are at pains to join practice to knowledge, we may make ourselves thoroughly acquainted with, without turning over many books. It is the distinguishing excellence of this religion, that it is entirely popular, and fitted, both in its doctrines and in its evidences, to all conditions and capacities of reasonable creatures—a character, which does not belong to any other religious or philosophical system, that ever appeared in the world. I wonder to see so many men, eminent, both for their piety and for their capacity, labouring to make a mystery of this divine institution. If God vouchsafes to reveal himself to mankind, can we suppose, that he chooses to do so in such a manner as that none but the learned and contemplative can understand him? The generality of mankind can never, in any possible circumstances, have leisure or capacity for learning, or profound contemplation. If, therefore, we make Christianity a mystery, we exclude the greater part of mankind from the knowledge of it; which is directly contrary to the intention of its author, as is plain from his explicit and reiterated declarations. In a word, I am perfectly convinced, that an intimate acquaintance with the scripture, particularly the gospels, is all that is necessary to our accomplishment in true Christian knowledge. I have looked into some systems of theology; but I never read one of them to an end, because I found I could never reap any instruction from them. To darken what is clear, by wrapping it up in the veil of system and science, was all the purpose that even the best of them seemed to me to answer. True it is, there are, even in the gospels, and in the discourses of Jesus Christ himself, some things that stand in need of illustration, as when he adopts proverbial phrases peculiar to Judea, or alludes to the customs of that country and those times; but these obscurities are but few in number, and generally relate to matters of less indispensible utility; and I presume, a very moderate share of erudition is all that is necessary to make us understand them, as far as they were intended to be understood by us. As these, I am convinced, are your sentiments, you will agree with me in thinking, that it is not necessary for us, even though we were clergymen, to read a great deal of divinity, as it is called. Indeed, I am every day more and more inclined to Dr Gregory's opinion (which, by the bye, I think was Solomon's too), that the reading of many books of any sort is a bad thing, as it tends to withdraw a man's attention from himself, and

from those amusements and contemplations, which at once sweeten the temper and cherish the health. You will do me the justice to believe, that, by the word amusements, I do not mean drinking, or gaming, or any of the fashionable modes of dissipation: I mean the study of the works of nature, and some of the best performances in the fine arts, which I have always found the most pleasing, as well as the most salutary amusement, both to my mind and body. But I must certainly have tired you with this long disquisition.

"I am much obliged to you for your account of Dr Hawkesworth. I want much to see his translation of Telemachus: but no copies of it have come to this country. The former translations were all very indifferent. I am inclined to think that the Doctor judged right in not making his translation too poetical and figurative. His own prose style is as much ornamented as good prose can well be; and nearly as much (if I mistake not) as Cambray's style, even where it is most poetical. The measured prose (as they call it), which we have in the translations from Ossian, would, I am afraid, become disgusting in a work so long as Telemachus. Besides, the style of this work is really simple, and of the narrative or epic kind, as it ought to be; whereas, the poems of the Highland bard are altogether of the lyric cast, both in the ornaments of the style, and in the arrangement and detail of the fable. I wonder how the editor of these poems took it into his head to call them epic. They are wholly lyric, and can no more be referred to the class of epic poems, than Milton's "Paradise Lost" can be called an ode.

"The account you give me of the œconomy of Dr Hawkesworth's family pleases me much.* I am entirely of your mind in regard to Protestant nunneries or convents, which are much wanted in this country, and which, under proper regulations, might, as you justly observe, be productive of the best effects. Our reformers seem to have wholly forgot the old maxim, *Fas est et ab hoste doceri.* If any practice was in use among the Papists, this was enough to make them reject it; and it was almost enough to recommend any practice to them, that it was contrary to the usage of their adversaries. I wish, however, they had condescended to borrow a

* See Appendix, [Q.]

little church music, and somewhat of more decorum and solemnity in their public worship, even from the Papists; and that they had provided some safe and creditable asylum for ladies of small fortunes and high breeding, although this had been done in imitation of the votaries of the Romish church. It seems as decent, at least, to imitate the Roman Catholics as the Mahometans; and yet we (Presbyterians) seem to have imitated the latter, in banishing from our churches all music, at least all good music; that which we have retained being in general so very bad, that it is necessary for a person to have a bad ear before he can relish the worship of the church of Scotland.

"I much approve your notion of epitaphs, and your resolution of erecting a monument to the memory of your father. The epitaph, of which you favoured me with a copy, is exceeding good, and stands in no need of being enlarged, abridged, or altered. In my opinion, it is just what it ought to be. However, to shew my willingness to do what you desire, I have proposed a few alterations, corrections I cannot call them, for I have doubts about their propriety. I therefore propose this form (which, however, I heartily submit.)

Here are deposited,
In the firm hope of a blessed resurrection,
The ashes of
Sir WILLIAM FORBES, *Baronet, Advocate,*
*Of the family of Monymusk ;**
Who left this transitory world
On the 12th of May, 1743, *aged* 36,
Adorned with many virtues ; stained with no crimes.
With the shattered remains of paternal possessions,
Once ample and flourishing,
He supported through the whole of life,
Without ostentation,
But with dignity and spirit,
That rank to which he was by birth entitled.
In his death, which he long foresaw,
He displayed equal magnanimity ;
Enduring, without complaint, the attacks of a painful distemper,
And calmly resigning his soul to him who gave it.
This marble is erected
By his only surviving Son,
Who,
Though deeply affected with his loss,
Submits to the Divine wisdom,
That saw proper to deprive him early of such a Parent,
Before he was able to profit
By so bright an example
Of
Christian virtue.

"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

* The name of his paternal estate, but which had been sold by his grandfather many years ago.

"As soon as you determine upon the form of the epitaph, you will cause it to be printed in capitals, and give one of the printed copies to the stone-cutter to work after: I have had some little experience in those matters, and I believe there is no other way to keep the workmen from blundering.

"I have read both "Zingis" and the "Fatal Discovery:" there are good things in both, especially in the last; but I do not greatly admire either the one or the other."

Of the warmth of Dr Beattie's affection for his friends, I cannot give a stronger proof than by transcribing part of a letter written by him to me, on occasion of the fall of the North Bridge in Edinburgh, when a gentleman and lady, and three others, were unfortunately killed.

LETTER XXXI.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Perth, Friday, 4th August, 1769.

"I WAS in great anxiety last night for a few minutes about you and Mr Arbuthnot. I had waited for you half an hour, and then went to Mr Arbuthnot's, where Mrs Arbuthnot told me, that you and he had gone away about an hour before, in quest of me. On my arrival at Dr Gregory's, immediately after, I heard of the terrible accident of the fall of the bridge. Your house in the new town, and some other ideas which then occurred, brought you two so strongly in my imagination, that I should soon have been in a most anxious situation, had not a messenger luckily arrived from you, bringing Tasso's "Gierusalemme" to James Gregory. I shall like that excellent bard the better as long as I live. When I got home, a line was waiting me from Mr Arbuthnot, of whose safety I had no doubt after the messenger came from you; and, by one lucky accident or other, I learned, before I went to bed, that none of my friends or acquaintance were concerned in that sad

event. Yet, alas, the persons who have perished had friends and acquaintance of more sensibility perhaps than I. But we ought not to repine at, but adore Providence in all its dispensations, whatever be their appearance, whether good or bad. Pray let me hear, as soon as you can, who are the sufferers in this calamity, for I am greatly concerned about it.

IN order that the following letter may be understood, it may be proper to mention, that Dr Beattie, having now finished the manuscript of his "Essay on Truth," was desirous of selling it to a bookseller for publication, not with any view, as he had often declared, of obtaining a great price, but in order that he might avoid all risk to himself, and that the publisher might feel his own interest connected with the sale of the book, which otherwise, he feared, would never make its way in the world. Dr Beattie, therefore, committed the care of this business to Mr Arbuthnot and me, with ample authority to us, to dispose of the manuscript as we should judge proper.

On our applying, however, to the bookseller, whom we thought most likely to publish it with advantage, we were mortified by his positive refusal to purchase the manuscript, although he readily offered to publish it on Dr Beattie's account, a mode to which we knew Dr Beattie would never agree. Thus there was some danger of a work being lost, the publication of which, we flattered ourselves would do much good in the world.

In this dilemma it occurred to me, that we might, without much artifice, bring the business to an easy conclusion by our own interposition. We therefore resolved, that we ourselves should be the purchasers, at a sum with which we knew Dr Beattie would be well satisfied, as the price of the first edition. But it was absolutely necessary that the business should be glossed over as much as possible; otherwise, we had reason to fear he would not give his consent to our taking on us a risk, which he himself had refused to run.

I therefore wrote to him (nothing surely but the truth, although, I confess, not the whole truth), that the manuscript was sold for fifty guineas, which I remitted to him by a bank-bill; and I added,

that we had stipulated with the bookseller who was to print the book, that we should be partners in the publication. On such trivial causes do things of considerable moment often depend. For had it not been for this interference of ours in this somewhat ambiguous manner, perhaps the "Essay on Truth," on which all Dr Beattie's future fortunes hinged, might never have seen the light. It also strongly marks the slender opinion entertained by the booksellers at that period, of the value of a work which has since risen into such well-merited celebrity.

LETTER XXXII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

26th October, 1769.

"I THIS moment received yours of the 23d current, inclosing a bank post-bill for 52*l.* 10*s.* I am too much affected with a sense of your and Mr Arbuthnot's friendship on this, as on all other occasions, to say any thing in the way of thanks or compliment. Like a man on the verge of bankruptcy, I am become almost careless in regard to the extent of the new or old debt I owe to your goodness. If you are determined to persist in heaping favours and obligations upon me, why, be it so; I shall, at least, in one respect be even with you, or endeavour to be so; I shall try to be as grateful as you are kind. As this book had cost me a good deal of labour, and as I had brought myself to think it a pretty good book, I should have been much disappointed if I had not got it published; and I do firmly believe, that, if it had not been for you, it never would have been published. As this is the light in which I consider what you have now done for me, you will readily believe, from the nature of that attachment which all authors bear to the offspring of their brain, that I have a pretty high sense of the favour.

"The price does really exceed my warmest expectations; nay, I am much afraid that it exceeds the real commercial value of the book, and I am not much surprised that ——— refuses to have

a share in it, considering that he is one of the principal proprietors of Mr Hume's works, and, in consequence of that, may have such a personal regard for him as would prevent his being concerned in any work of this nature. In a word, I am highly pleased with the whole transaction, except in this one respect, that you and Mr Arbuthnot have agreed to be partners in this publication. This gives me real concern. I know you both despise the risk of losing any thing by it, and will despise the loss when you come to know it, of which I am afraid there is too great a chance; but notwithstanding, I could have wished you out of the scrape; and if it shall afterwards appear that you are losers, I shall be tempted to regret that ever I gave you the opportunity. There are some delicacies on this subject, which embarrass me so much, that I know not how to express myself intelligibly. In a word, you will account the loss a trifle; but to me it will not have that appearance.

"I will now fall to work, and put the last hand to my manuscript. This will take up a week or two, as several things have occurred to me within these few days, which I think will, when added, make the book much more perfect. I will venture to say, that few authors have ever been more solicitous than I on this occasion, to make their work correct. It has undergone a most critical examination in the hands of my two friends, Doctors Campbell and Gerard, who have both written observations on it, and who are perfect masters of all the subjects treated in it, and really, in my judgment, the most acute metaphysicians of the age. Both have given me great encouragement, and assured me, that, in their opinion, my book will do good, if people will only vouchsafe it a reading. It was but the other day I received Dr Gerard's remarks, and on my desiring him, honestly and impartially to give his judgment, "I think," says he, "it is a most excellent book, "and cannot fail to do you credit with all the friends of virtue and "religion." I mention this only to show you, that if it shall afterwards appear that I have judged wrong in thinking this book proper to be printed, I am not singular in the mistake. One thing I was particularly careful in recommending to the two gentlemen just mentioned: I desired them, above every thing, to observe whether I had in any place misrepresented my adversaries, or mistaken their doctrine. They tell me, that, in their judgment, I

have not, except in two or three passages of no consequence, which, however, I have carefully corrected. I have the more confidence in their judgment in this particular, because they are perfect masters of the modern sceptical philosophy, and are particularly well acquainted with Mr Hume's writings, indeed better than any other person I know, except Dr Reid at Glasgow; to whom, however, they are no ways inferior. Much of my knowledge on these subjects I owe to their conversation and writings, as Dr Gregory very well knows. Since I am upon this subject, I shall tell you farther, that the book, now under consideration, has been my principal study these four years; I have actually written it three times over, and some parts of it oftener. I have availed myself, all I could, of reading and conversation, in order that I might be aware of all the possible objections that could be made to my doctrine. Every one of these, that has come to my knowledge, has been canvassed and examined to the bottom, at least according to the examiner's measure of understanding. If all this, joined to my natural abhorrence of misrepresentation, and to the sense I have of what my character would suffer if I could be charged with want of candour; if all this, I say, is not sufficient to make my book correct, I must for ever despair of making it so."

Of the warmth of affection on the part of Dr Beattie towards his friends, there is another striking proof in the following letter to Major Mercer. It likewise strongly marks the playful humour which he sometimes introduced into his correspondence with those friends whom he loved; with whom he was wont to joke in conversation, and with whom he felt himself perfectly at ease.

LETTER XXXIII.

DR BEATTIE TO CAPTAIN (AFTERWARDS MAJOR) MERCER.*

Aberdeen, 26th November, 1769.

"I SHALL not take up your time with enlarging on all the causes that have kept me so long from writing. I shall only tell you, that while the summer lasted, I went about as much as possible, and imposed on myself an abstinence from reading, writing, and thinking, with a view to shake off this vile vertigo, which, however, still sticks by me, with a closeness of attachment which I could well excuse. Since that time, I mean since the end of summer, I have delayed writing, till I should be able to inform you of the fate of the papers you were so good last winter as to read and interest yourself in. They are sold to a bookseller in Edinburgh, and are now actually in the press, and will make their public appearance, if I mistake not, in the spring. I have taken no little pains to finish them; and many additions, and illustrations, and corrections, and expunctions, and softenings, and hardenings, have been made on them. With them I intend to bid adieu to metaphysics, and all your authors of profound speculation; for, of all the trades to which that multifarious animal man can turn himself, I am now disposed to look upon intense study as the idlest, the most unsatisfying, and the most unprofitable. You cannot easily conceive with what greediness I now peruse the "Arabian Nights' "Entertainments," "Gulliver's Travels," "Robinson Crusoe," &c. I am like a man who has escaped from the mines, and is now drinking in the fresh air and light, on the top of some of the mountains of Dalecarlia. These books put me in mind of the days of former years, the romantic æra of fifteen, or the still more careless period of nine or ten, the scenes of which, as they now stand pictured in my fancy, seem to be illuminated with a sort of purple light, formed with the softest, purest gales, and painted with a ver-

* For some account of Major Mercer, see p. 20. and Appendix, [R.]

dure to which nothing similar is to be found in the degenerate summers of modern times. Here I would quote the second stanza of Gray's "Ode on Eton College," but it would take up too much room, and you certainly have it by heart.

"I hear you are likely to be a major in the army soon. I need not tell you on how many accounts I wish that event to take place. I should look on it as a forerunner of your return, which I should certainly rejoice at, even with an excess of joy, though I had not a single particle of generosity in my whole composition, my own happiness is so much interested in it. Alas! my walks now are quite solitary. No more do the banks of Dee resound to those confabulations, critical, grammatical, philosophical, sentimental, &c. which whilom were agitated between us. I have not seen a man, since you left us, whose notions of Homer and Achilles were the same with mine.

"I was a fortnight at Edinburgh this summer, where I saw our friend Sylvester* almost every day. You would be surprised to see his outward man so little changed. His voice has the same tone (only with a little addition of the English accent) as when he went away. As to stature and *embonpoint*, he is much the same (I fear I have misapplied that word, which I believe is never used of lean people). His complexion rather fresher and fairer than before. He speaks French, Italian, and German with fluency, and is as fond of poetry as ever. He never drinks above two or three glasses of wine at a sitting; and, indeed, seems to have acquired a great many good qualities by his travelling, without the loss of a single one of those he formerly possessed.

"You would see Mr Gray's installation ode, and, if so, I am sure you have approved it. It is not equal to some other of his pieces, but it is the best ode of the panegyrical kind I have ever seen. I had a letter from him since it came out, in which he says, "That it cannot last above a single day, or, if its existence be pro-"longed beyond that period, it must be by means of newspaper "parodies, and witless criticism." He says, he considered himself bound in gratitude to the D. of Grafton to write this ode; and that he foresaw the abuse that would be thrown on him for it, but

* The Right Honourable Sylvester Douglas, Lord Glenbervie. Vide Appendix, [S.]

did not think it worth his while to avoid it. I am not of his mind in regard to the duration of the poem. I am much mistaken if it do not carry down the name of his patron to the latest posterity; an honour which, I fear, no other great man of this age will have the chance to receive from the hands of the muses."

I am induced to print the following letter of Dr Beattie's, in order to show, that he was aware, before the publication of his "Essay on Truth," how much he was supposed to have employed too great a degree of acrimony in the original composition of that essay; and how far he himself entertained the belief, that he had removed all just cause of any such complaint, before its publication. It proves, too, I think, very clearly, how much he was actuated by principle in all his writings; and that, in thus warmly expressing his sentiments on the subject, he was merely acting, as he thought, in the discharge of his duty.

LETTER XXXIV.

DR BEATTIE TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

Aberdeen, 27th November, 1769.

"THE concern your lordship is pleased to take in my writings does me a great deal of honour. I should think myself very happy, if, by means of them, I could contribute any thing to the advancement of the cause of truth and virtue.

"I have not been able, since you left us, to make any considerable additions to the "Minstrel;" all my leisure hours being employed in putting the last hand to my "Essay on Truth," which was actually put to the press about three weeks ago. It will, I think, make its public appearance in the spring. Several important alterations and additions have been made. Most of the asperities have been struck out, and such of them as have been retained are very much softened. Still, however, there are, and must be, some strong pictures and expressions, which do not well suit the

apathy and equivocating lukewarmness of this age. But my express design was, to set our sceptics in a new light, and therefore I found it necessary to pursue a new method. I want to shew, that their reasonings and doctrines are not only false, but ridiculous; and that their talents, as philosophers and logicians, are absolutely contemptible. Your lordship will, I presume, do me the justice to believe, that I have not *affected* to treat them with more contempt than I think they deserve. I should be ashamed of myself, if, in pleading the cause of truth, I were to personate a character that is not my own. The doctrines I have maintained in this book are, every one of them, according to my real sentiments. I have added some remarks on personal identity; on the veracity of our senses in regard to extension, distance, magnitude, and those other objects of touch which are commonly referred, both to that sense, and to sight; on the different classes to which *certain* truths seem reducible; and I have made several other additions, which, I hope, will render the book less exceptionable than it was when your lordship did me the honour to peruse it.

"The 'Minstrel' I intend to resume next summer. It will consist of three books; and, as it promises to be by much the best, and will probably be the last, of my poetical attempts, I propose to finish it at great leisure."

The Earl of Buchan, being desirous of exciting an attention to classical learning at Aberdeen, established a prize* to be anually contended for among the young men educated at the Marischal College; the subject to be the best Greek exercise. In consequence of the communication of this design to Dr Beattie, Lord Buchan received from him the following letter, by order of the university.

* A silver pen, presented by Lord Buchan to the university, to which a medallion is annually appended, with the name of the successful candidate.

LETTER XXXV.

DR BEATTIE TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

Aberdeen, 15th December, 1769.

"I LAID your letter before a full meeting of our university; and have their orders to return to your Lordship their most grateful acknowledgments for your attention to the interests of learning in general, and your generosity to this society in particular. We accept, with the most unfeigned sentiments of gratitude, the noble present you have done us the honour to promise us; and will most zealously endeavour to promote, to the utmost of our power, those good purposes your Lordship has so much at heart. We beg to know more particularly, in what way it will be proper for us to propose the prize-subjects? and from what sciences the arguments are to be taken? what ranks of students (whether the lower or higher classes, or all, in general) are to be admitted as candidates? in what manner their performances are to be examined? and whether it will be expedient to publish, in the newspapers, the names of such as shall be thought to have obtained the prize? In these, and in all other particulars, we would choose to be directed by your Lordship's judgment."*

LETTER XXXVI.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 4th May, 1770.

"NOTHING, I think, is stirring in the literary world. All ranks are run mad with politics; and I know not whether there was

* The annual competition for this prize still continues at Aberdeen.

any period at which it was more unseasonable to publish new books. I do not mean that the nation has no need of instruction; I mean only, that it has neither leisure nor inclination to listen to any.

"I am a very great admirer of Armstrong's poem on "Health;" and therefore as soon as I heard that the same author had published two volumes of "Miscellanies," I sent a commission for them with great expectations; but I am miserably disappointed. I know not what is the matter with Armstrong; but he seems to have conceived a rooted aversion at the whole human race, except a few friends, who, it seems, are dead. He sets the public opinion at defiance; a piece of boldness, which neither Virgil nor Horace were ever so shameless as to acknowledge. It is very true, that living authors are often hardly dealt with by their contemporaries; witness Milton, Collins the poet, and many others: but I believe it is equally true, that no good piece was ever published, which did not sooner or later obtain the public approbation. How is it possible it should be otherwise? People read for amusement. If a book be capable of yielding amusement, it will naturally be read; for no man is an enemy to what gives him pleasure. Some books, indeed, being calculated for the intellects of a few, can please only a few; yet if they produce this effect, they answer all the end the authors intended; and if those few be men of any note, which is generally the case, the herd of mankind will very willingly fall in with their judgment, and consent to admire what they do not understand. I question whether there are now in Europe two thousand, or even one thousand, persons, who understand a word of Newton's "Prin-"cipia;" yet there are in Europe many millions who extol Newton as a very great philosopher. Those are but a small number who have any sense of the beauties of Milton; yet every body admires Milton, because it is the fashion. Of all the English poets of this age, Mr Gray is most admired, and, I think, with justice; yet there are, comparatively speaking, but a few who know any thing of his, but his "Church-yard Elegy," which is by no means the best of his works. I do not think that Dr Armstrong has any cause to complain of the public: his "Art of Health" is not indeed a popular poem, but it is very much liked, and has often been printed. It will make him known and esteemed by posterity: and I presume he will be the more esteemed, if all his other works perish

with him. In his "Sketches," indeed, are many sensible, and some striking, remarks; but they breathe such a rancorous and contemptuous spirit, and abound so much in odious vulgarisms and colloquial execrations, that in reading we are as often disgusted as pleased. I know not what to say of his "Universal Almanack:" it seems to me an attempt at humour; but such humour is either too high or too low for my comprehension. The plan of his tragedy, called the "Forced Marriage," is both obscure and improbable; yet there are good strokes in it, particularly in the last scene.

"As I know your taste and talents in painting, I cannot help communicating to you an observation, which I lately had occasion, not to make, for I had made it before, but to see illustrated in a very striking manner. I was reading the Abbé du Bos' "Reflections on "Poetry and Painting." In his 13th section of the first volume, he gives some very ingenious remarks on two of Raphael's cartoons. Speaking of "Christ's charge to Peter," he says of one of the figures in the group of apostles, "Près de lui est placé un autre "Apôtre embarassé de sa contenance; on le discerne pour être "d'un temperament melancholique à la maigreur de son visage "livide, à sa barbe noire et plate, à l'habitude de son corps, enfin a "tous les traits que les naturalistes ont assignés à ce temperament. "Il se courbe; et les yeux fixement attachés sur J. C. il est devoré "d'une jalousie morne pour une choix dont il ne se plaindra point, "mais dont il conservera long tems un vif ressentiment; enfin on "reconnoit là Judas aussi distinctement qu' à le voir pendu au "figuier, une bourse renversée au col. Je n' ai point prêté d'es-"prit a Raphael," &c. You see the ingenious Abbé is very positive; and yet you will immediately recollect, that the charge of "Feed my sheep," to which this cartoon refers, was given to Peter after the resurrection, and when, consequently, Judas could not be present (John xxi. 16.) If it be said, that this charge refers to the keys, which Peter carries in his bosom; a charge given long before: I answer, first, that the *sheep* in the back-ground is a presumption of the contrary; and, secondly, that the wounds in the feet and hands of Jesus, and the number of apostles present, which is only eleven, are a certain proof, that the fact to which this cartoon relates happened after the resurrection. The Abbé's mistake is of little moment in itself; but it serves to illustrate this observation, that

the expression of painting is at the best very indefinite, and generally leaves scope to the ingenious critic *de prêter d'esprit* to the painter."*

At length, in the month of May 1770, Dr Beattie's "Essay on "the nature and immutability of Truth, in opposition to Sophistry "and Scepticism," made its appearance. As the manuscript had been seen by several eminent men of learning, and as the "Essay "on Truth" was known to be written as a direct attack on the philosophical principles of Mr Hume, its publication had been looked for with considerable expectation. The boldness, too, of a writer so little known to the world as Beattie was at this time (for he had merely published a few juvenile poems), in attacking an author so formidable as Mr Hume, contributed not a little to excite the public curiosity. Mr Hume was in the zenith of his popularity. After a period of more than thirty years spent in literary pursuits, and after having acted in several respectable public situations,† to which his reputation as an author had no doubt recommended him, he had returned to Edinburgh, opulent from a pension which had been bestowed on him by government, but still more by the fruits of that plan of rigid economy, which, he tells us, he had early adopted, and steadily pursued, for the purpose of supplying his original deficiency of fortune, and rendering himself independent in the world.‡

* I have lately met with a criticism similar to the above of Dr Beattie's on the Abbé du Bos, in the life of Raphael, in "Pilkington's Dictionary of "the Lives of the Painters," p. 501. A coincidence, however, that must have been entirely accidental; and which no way detracts from the originality of Dr Beattie's observation: for I am satisfied, he had never read Pilkington, otherwise he would not have sent me the remark as being his own.

† Mr Hume attended General St Clair, in the year 1746, as secretary to his expedition on the coast of France. In 1747, he attended the general in the same station in his military embassy to the courts of Vienna and Turin. In the year 1763, he accompanied the Earl of Hertford, as secretary on his embassy to Paris, where he was left *chargé d'affaires*, on that nobleman's going as lord lieutenant to Ireland. And in 1767, he was appointed by Lord Hertford's brother, General Conway, to be under-secretary of state, while the general held the seals.

‡ Life of Mr Hume, prefixed to his works, written by himself, p. 7.

Mr Hume, in his disposition, was humane and charitable, his temper was mild, and his manners pleasing, which, added to his natural abilities, as well as his great stock of acquired knowledge, made his company much sought after. The circle of society, therefore, in which he moved at Edinburgh, was not only extensive, but the most distinguished for rank and fashion, and literary merit, of which the metropolis of Scotland could boast. Of all this I am myself a living witness; for I was well acquainted with Mr Hume, with whom I frequently met in the intercourse of social life.

Mr Hume had deservedly acquired a high reputation as an historian; and he may, with truth, be said to have been among the first to introduce into this country that dignified and classical style of composition with which we are so much delighted in his "History of England," as well as in the writings of Robertson, Orme, and other eminent authors since Mr Hume's time. His account of the British constitution, of the feudal system, and his affecting narratives of the death of Charles the First, of Lord Strafford, of Archbishop Laud, as well as other passages that might be cited, are proofs of a masterly genius, which must place Mr Hume in the first and most distinguished rank of writers of history in the English language. He had published, likewise, essays on political economy,* as well as on subjects of taste and literature; which, notwithstanding the revolutions, both in opinions and things, that an interval of upwards of half a century has produced, are still perused with pleasure by every classical scholar. Happy had it been, *si sic omnia*. But Mr Hume had unfortunately, at an early period of his life,† imbibed the principles of a cold-hearted and gloomy philosophy, the direct tendency of which was to distract the mind with doubts on subjects the most serious and important, and, in fact, to undermine the best interests, and dissolve the strongest ties, of human society. When he examined Mr Hume's philoso-

* Dr Adam Smith, in his valuable work, on the "Causes of the Wealth of Nations," has acknowledged, that Mr Hume was the first writer who rightly understood, and properly explained, in his "Essays," some of the principles of political economy. Vol. ii. p. 39, 119. ed. 3.

† He says, in the advertisement to his "Essays," that he had projected his "Treatise on Human Nature" before he left college, and wrote and published it not long after.

phy, and contemplated the mischief which arose from it, Dr Beattie's whole faculties rose in arms within him, to use the emphatic expression of an anonymous journalist,* in the defence of the cause of truth, and of every virtuous principle; and he resolved, without fear, to attempt to show the fallacy of a system, which he conceived to rest on no solid foundation. Such was the origin of the "Essay "on Truth;" of which, besides what I have already inserted from his private correspondence with his friends, Dr Beattie gives, himself, the following account, in the advertisement to the edition of the "Essay" published in quarto, in London, in the year 1776.

"Ever since I began to attend to matters of this kind, I had heard Mr Hume's philosophy mentioned as a system very unfriendly to religion, both revealed and natural, as well as to science; and its author spoken of as a teacher of sceptical and atheistical doctrines, and withal as a most acute and ingenious writer. I had reason to believe, that his arguments, and his influence as a great literary character, had done harm, by subverting or weakening the good principles of some, and countenancing the licentious opinions of others. Being honoured with the care of a part of the British youth; and considering it as my indispensible duty (from which, I trust, I shall never deviate) to guard their minds against impiety and error, I endeavoured, among other studies that belonged to my office, to form a right estimate of Mr Hume's philosophy, so as not only to understand his peculiar tenets, but also to perceive their *connection* and *consequences*.

"In forming this estimate, I thought it at once the surest and the fairest method to begin with the "Treatise of Human Nature," which was allowed, and is well known to be, the ground-work of the whole; and in which some of the principles and reasonings are more fully prosecuted, and their connection and consequences more clearly seen by an attentive reader (notwithstanding some inferiority in point of style), than in those more elegant republications of the system, that have appeared in the form of "Essays." Every sound

* Account of the death of Dr Beattie, in the "Orthodox Churchman's "Magazine and Review, for August 1803, No. 33."

argument that may have been urged against the paradoxes of the "Treatise," particularly against its first principles, does, in my opinion, tend to discredit the system; as every successful attempt to weaken the foundation of a building does in effect promote the downfal of the superstructure. Paradoxes there are in the "Trea- "tise" which are not in the "Essays;" and, in like manner, there are licentious doctrines in these, which are not in the other; and therefore I have not directed *all* my batteries against the first. And if the plan I had in view, when I published this book, had been completed, the reader would have seen, that, though I began with the "Treatise of Human Nature," it was never my intention to end with it. In fact, the "Essay on Truth" is only one part of what I projected. Another part was then in so great forwardness, that I thought its publication not very remote, and had even made proposals to a bookseller concerning it; though afterwards, on enlarging the plan, I found I had not taken so wide a view of the subject as would be necessary. In that part, my meaning was, to have applied the principles of this book to the illustration of certain truths of morality and religion, to which the reasonings of Helvetius, of Mr Hume in his "Essays," and of some other modern philosophers, seemed unfavourable. That work, however, I have been obliged, on account of my health, to lay aside; and whether I shall ever be in a condition to resume it, is at present very uncertain."*

In the prosecution of this design, Dr Beattie has treated his subject in the following manner: He first endeavours to trace the several kinds of evidence and reasoning up to their first principles; with a view to ascertain the standard of truth, and explain its immutability. He shows, in the second place, that his sentiments on this head, how inconsistent soever with the genius of scepticism, and with the principles and practice of sceptical writers, are yet perfectly consistent with the genius of true philosophy, and with

* His want of health prevented him from prosecuting his original design of writing a second part of the "Essay on Truth." But he contrived to introduce into some of his subsequent publications some portion of what he intended the second part should contain.

the practice and principles of those, whom all acknowledge to have been the most successful in the investigation of truth; concluding with some inferences, or rules by which the more important fallacies of the sceptical philosophers may be detected by every person of common sense, even though he should not possess acuteness of metaphyiscal knowledge sufficient to qualify him for a logical confutation of them. In the third place, he answers some objections, and makes some remarks, by way of estimate of scepticism, and sceptical writers.*

* Essay on Truth, p. 15.

SECTION III.

FROM THE PUBLICATION OF THE "ESSAY ON TRUTH," TO THE DEATH OF DR BEATTIE'S ELDEST SON, IN THE YEAR 1790.

NO sooner did the "Essay on Truth make its appearance, than it was assailed by the admirers of Mr. Hume as a violent and personal attack on that writer. Of this Dr Beattie takes notice in the following letters.

It is here necessary to mention, that, upon the publication of the "Essay on Truth," it was thought advisable, that a short analysis of the essay should be inserted in the Edinburgh newspapers, in order that something might be known of the manner in which the subject was treated. This task Dr Blacklock undertook, and executed with much ability.* But previous to its publication, he thought it proper to submit what he had written to Dr Beatie, who replied to Dr Blacklock as follows.

LETTER XXXVII.

DR BEATTIE TO DR BLACKLOCK.

Aberdeen, 27th May, 1770.

"I CANNOT express how much I think myself indebted to your friendship, in entering so warmly into all my concerns, and in making out so readily, and at such length, the two critical articles. The shortest one was sent back, in course of post, to Mr Kincaid,† from whom you would learn the reasons that induced me

* Vide Edinburgh Evening Courant, 2d June, 1770.

† The publisher.

to make some alterations in the analysis you had there made of my book. The other paper I return in this packet. I have made a remark or two at the end, but no alterations. Indeed, how could I? you understand my philosophy as perfectly as I do; you express it much better, and you embellish it with a great many of your own sentiments, which, though new to me, are exceedingly apposite to my subject, and set some parts of it in a fairer light than I have been able to do in my book. I need not tell you, how happy I am in the thought, that this work of mine has your approbation; for I know you too well, to impute to mere civility the many handsome things you have said in praise of it. I know you approve it, because I know you incapable to say one thing and think another; and I do assure you, I would not forego your approbation to avoid the censure of fifty Mr Humes. What do I say? Mr Hume's censure I am so far from being ashamed of, that I think it does me honour. It is, next to his conversion, (which I have no reason to look for) the most desirable thing I have to expect from that quarter. I have heard, from very good authority, that he speaks of me and my book with very great bitterness (I own, I thought he would rather have affected to treat both with contempt); and that he says, I have not used him like a gentleman. He is quite right to set the matter upon that footing. It is an odious charge; it is an objection easily remembered, and, for that reason, will be often repeated, by his admirers; and it has this farther advantage, that being (in the present case) perfectly unintelligible, it cannot possibly be answered. The truth is, I, as a rational, moral, and immortal being, and something of a philosopher, treated him as a rational, moral, and immortal being, a sceptic, and an atheistical writer. My design was, not to make a book full of fashionable phrases, and polite expressions, but to undeceive the public in regard to the merits of the sceptical philosophy, and the pretensions of its abettors. To say, that I ought not to have done this with plainness and spirit, is to say, in other words, that I ought either to have held my peace, or to have been a knave. In this case, I might perhaps have treated Mr Hume as a gentleman, but I should not have treated society, and my own conscience, as became a man and a Christian. I have all along foreseen, and still foresee, that I shall have many reproaches, and cavils, and sneers, to encounter on this occasion; but I am prepared to meet them. I am not ashamed of my cause; and, if I may be-

lieve those whose good opinion I value as one of the chief blessings of life, I need not be ashamed of my work. You are certainly right in your conjecture, that it will not have a quick sale. Notwithstanding all my endeavours to render it perspicuous and entertaining, it is still necessary for the person who reads it *to think a little;* a task to which every reader will not submit. My subject too is unpopular, and my principles such as a man of the world would blush to acknowledge. How then can my book be popular! If it refund the expence of its publication, it will do as much as any person, who knows the present state of the literary world, can reasonably expect from it.

"I am not at all surprised at your notions in regard to liberty and necessity. I have known several persons of the best understanding, and of the best heart, who could not get over the arguments in favour of necessity, even though their notions of the absurd and dangerous consequences of fatality were the same with mine. The truth is, I see no possible way of reconciling the fatalists with the liberty-men, except by supposing human liberty to be a self-evident fact, which, perhaps, the fatalists will never acknowledge, and which the staunch Arminian, who has been long in the practice of arguing the matter, would think a dangerous and unnecessary supposition. My own sentiments of this point I have given fairly and honestly in my book. That I am a free agent, is what I not only believe, but what I judge to be of such importance, that all morality must be founded on it, yea, and all religion too. To vindicate the ways of God to man, is not so difficult a thing when we acknowledge human liberty; but, on the principles of fatality, it seems to me to be absolutely impossible.

"I beg you will, from time to time, let me know what you hear of the fate of my book. Every author thinks that his works ought to engross every body's attention. I am not such a novice as to have more of this vanity than my neighbours: yet I think it highly probable, that my book will be the subject of some conversation, especially about Edinburgh, where Mr Hume is so well known, and where I happen to be not altogether unknown. By the bye, it was extremely well judged not to mention Mr Hume's name, except very slightly, in the two critical articles you wrote. People will do me a great injustice, if they say or think, that my book is written solely against Mr Hume. Yet many, I am convinced, will

say so; and, therefore, it was proper to say nothing in those articles that might encourage such a notion."

LETTER XXXVIII.

DR JOHN GREGORY TO DR BEATTIE.

Edinburgh, 20th June, 1770.

"MUCH woe has your essay wrought me. The hero of the piece is extremely angry, and so are all his friends, who are numerous. As it was known, that the manuscript had been in my hands, I was taken to task for letting it go to the press as it stands. I have openly avowed every where, that I had advised you to publish your essay; that I thought the reasoning it contained both ingenious and solid; that it was not only written with great perspicuity, but with a spirit and elegance very uncommon on such subjects; that the importance of the subject justified sufficiently the warmth with which it was written; that it was no metaphysical disquisition about questions of curiosity, but a defence of principles, on which the peace of society, the virtue of individuals, and the happiness of every one who had either feeling or imagination, depended. I wished, at the same time, some particular expressions had been softened; but denied there being any personal abuse. In one place you say, "*What does the man mean?*" This, you know, is very contemptuous. In short, the spirit and warmth with which it is written, has got it more friends and more enemies than if it had been written with that polite and humble deference to Mr Hume's extraordinary abilities, which his friends think so justly his due. For my own part, I am so warm, not to say angry, about this subject, that I cannot entirely trust my own judgment; but I really think, that the tone of superiority assumed by the present race of infidels, and the contemptuous sneer with which they regard every friend of religion, contrasted with the timid behaviour of such as should support its cause, acting only on the defensive, seems to me to have a very unfavourable influence. It seems to imply a consciousness of truth on the one side, and a secret conviction, or at least diffidence of the cause on the other. What a

difference from the days of Addison, Arbuthnot, Swift, Pope, &c. who treated infidelity with a scorn and indignation we are now strangers to. I am now persuaded the book will answer beyond your expectations. I have recommended it strongly to my friends in England.

"I am positive in my opinion, that you should publish the first part of the "Minstrel," without waiting for the rest."

Mr Hume tells us, in his life, written by himself,* that he had formed a fixed resolution, which he inflexibly maintained, never to answer any body. But from what he has been heard to say on the subject of the "Essay on Truth," there is some reason to suppose, that, although he affected to treat the matter in a vein of ironical pleasantry, he did not derive that consolation from Beattie's work, which he pretends to have derived† from a pamphlet attributed to Dr Hurd, the present bishop of Worcester, against his "History "of Natural Religion." This pamphlet, I believe, the bishop afterwards disclaimed.

If, however, Dr Beattie found himself thus attacked by one set of men, he derived ample consolation from the popularity of his book, and the encomiums bestowed upon it by men of a different character. Some passages of his letters, at this time, strongly evince this success of his essay, which, indeed, far exceeded the most sanguine expectations, either of himself or his friends. But no testimony in his favour could convey to him such high gratification as that which he derived from the following letter from that accomplished scholar and excellent man, the first Lord Lyttelton, to whom Dr Beattie had taken the liberty of presenting a copy of

* Page 9.

† "In this interval," says Mr Hume, "I published my 'Natural History "'of Religion,' along with some other small pieces. Its public entry was "rather obscure, except only that Dr Hurd wrote a pamphlet against it, "with all the illiberal petulance, arrogance, and scurrility, which distin- "guished the Warburtonian school. This pamphlet gave me some conso- "lation for the otherwise indifferent reception of my performance."—P. 11.

his "Essay on Truth," in consequence of his having been mentioned to Lord Lyttelton by the late Dr Gregory.

LETTER XXXIX.

LORD LYTTELTON* TO DR BEATTIE.

Hill-street (London) 6th October, 1770.

"THAT the author of such a work as that you have done me the favour to send me, should entertain the opinion you are pleased to express of me and my writings, is an honour to me, of which I feel the high value. Never did I read any book, in which truths

* George, Lord Lyttelton, eldest son of Sir Thomas Lyttelton of Hagley, in Worcestershire, was early distinguished by his learning, his taste, and his poetical talents, of which he has left many beautiful specimens, but no poem of any extent. Among other pieces, his plaintive Monody, on the death of the first Lady Lyttelton, is familiar to, and admired by, every reader of taste. His works in prose are numerous. His "Persian Letters," and his "Dialogues of the Dead," are well known. But, above all, his valuable "Dissertation on the Conversion and Apostleship of St Paul," is entitled to the highest commendation, as a masterly and convincing argument in favour of revealed religion. It is a very important fact, which we have on his own authority, that he was originally inclined to scepticism in religious opinions; but, by the effect of study and candid reflection, he became a decided and a steady believer in revelation Lord Lyttelton also published an elaborate historical work on "The Age of Henry the Second." The style is void of ornament, but the book contains much valuable information, the result of diligent research. In his posthumous works, published by his nephew, are some very curious letters from Lord Lyttelton, while abroad, to his father, which set his filial piety in a very striking point of light.

Lord Lyttelton was distinguished as a speaker in parliament; and, as a polite scholar and a man of taste, was one of the most accomplished characters of his time. He was the friend of Pope, of Thomson, of Shenstone. And the letter to Dr Beattie, which has given occasion to the introduction of this slight biographical sketch of Lord Lyttelton, shows how strongly that great and good man was pleased to interest himself in the fortunes of our author, even before their personal acquaintance took place, and when Dr Beattie was merely known to his lordship by his writings, and the testimony of their common friend, Dr Gregory.

of the greatest importance to mankind are more skilfully extricated from the mazes of sophism, or where reason, wit, and eloquence join their forces more happily, in opposition to errors of the most pernicious nature.

"It has often given me great pain to see Bishop Berkeley, a most pious and learned man, overturn the main foundations of all religion and all knowledge, by the most extravagant scepticism concerning the real existence of matter, in some of his writings; and then fancy, that in others he could, by any force of argument, establish the evidences of Christianity, which are a perpetual appeal to the truth of our senses, and grounded on a supposition that they cannot deceive us in those things which are the proper and natural objects of them, within their due limits. Can one wonder that the sceptics should lay hold of the former in answer to the latter? And can any more useful service be done to Christianity, than to shew the fallacy of such whimsies as would make the body of Christ, which his disciples saw and felt, no body at all? and the proof of his resurrection, from that testimony of their senses, a mere delusive idea?

"Berkeley certainly was not sensible of the consequences of these doctrines, no more than Locke of those you reprehend in his essay; but whatever respect may be due to the persons of authors, their writings must be censured, when they deserve censure, and especially on such subjects. This the friends of Mr Hume have no more right to complain of, than those of Berkeley or Locke. Nor can the censure of systems, which attempt to shake the great pillars both of natural and revealed religion, be delivered by a believer, in terms as cool as if only a speculation on the nature of electricity, or the causes of an aurora borealis were in question. Mr Hume, as a man, from his probity, candour, and the humanity of his manners, deserves esteem and respect; but the more authority he draws from his personal character, or from the merit of his other books, the more care should be taken to prevent the ill impressions which his sceptical writings may make on a number of readers, who, having been used to admire him, and trust in his judgment, are disposed to let him also judge for them in these points, where the being misled must be fatal.

"Go on, sir, to employ your excellent talents in a cause worthy of them, and stop the progress of that folly, which, assuming the

venerable name of philosophy, tends to deprive human nature of the salutary light of its best and clearest knowledge, and throw it into a dark chaos of doubt and uncertainty.

"I beg you to present my affectionate compliments to good Dr Gregory, whom I have often been obliged to on many accounts, but never more than for the favour of procuring me your friendship, which I shall endeavour to cultivate by the best returns in my power."

The following letter to Mrs Inglis,* at Edinburgh, is truly valuable, as it contains Dr Beattie's sentiments on the important question, which has been so much agitated, whether a public or a private education for boys is to be preferred.

LETTER XL.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS INGLIS.

Aberdeen, 24th December, 1770.

"WHILE I lived in your neighbourhood, I often wished for an opportunity of giving you my opinion on a subject, in which I know you are very deeply interested; but one incident or other always put it out of my power. That subject is the education of your son, whom, if I mistake not, it is now high time to send to some public place of education. I have thought much on this subject; I have weighed every argument, that I could think of, on either side of the question. Much, you know, has been written upon it, and very plausible arguments have been offered, both for and against a public education. I set not much value upon these;

* Daughter of Colonel Gardiner, by Lady Frances Stuart, daughter f an Earl of Buchan. He was killed at the battle of Prestonpans, in Scotland, in September, 1745, fighting at the head of his regiment of dragoons.

speculating men are continually disputing, and the world is seldom the wiser. I have some little experience in this way; I have no hypothesis to mislead me; and the opinion or prejudice which I first formed upon the subject, was directly contrary to that, which experience has now taught me to entertain.

"Could mankind lead their lives in that solitude which is so favourable to many of our most virtuous affections, I should be clearly on the side of a private education. But most of us, when we go out into the world, find difficulties in our way, which good principles and innocence alone will not qualify us to encounter; we must have some address and knowledge of the world different from what is to be learned in books, or we shall soon be puzzled, disheartened, or disgusted. The foundation of this knowledge is laid in the intercourse of school-boys, or at least of young men of the same age. When a boy is always under the direction of a parent or tutor, he acquires such a habit of looking up to them for advice, that he never learns to think or act for himself; his memory is exercised, indeed, in retaining their advice, but his invention is suffered to languish, till at last it becomes totally inactive. He knows, perhaps, a great deal of history or science; but he knows not how to conduct himself on those ever-changing emergencies, which are too minute and too numerous to be comprehended in any system of advice. He is astonished at the most common appearances, and discouraged with the most trifling (because unexpected) obstacles; and he is often at his wits end, where a boy of much less knowledge, but more experience, would instantly devise a thousand expedients. Conscious of his own superiority in some things, he wonders to find himself so much inferior in others; his vanity meets with continual rubs and disappointments, and disappointed vanity is very apt to degenerate into sullenness and pride; he despises, or affects to despise, his fellows, because, though superior in address, they are inferior in knowledge; and they, in their turn, despise that knowledge, which cannot teach the owner how to behave on the most common occasions. Thus he keeps at a distance from his equals, and they at a distance from him; and mutual contempt is the natural consequence.

"Another inconvenience, attending private education, is the suppressing of the principle of emulation, without which it rarely happens that a boy prosecutes his studies with alacrity or success.

I have heard private tutors complain, that they were obliged to have recourse to flattery or bribery to engage the attention of their pupil; and I need not observe, how improper it is to set the example of such practices before children. True emulation, especially in young and ingenuous minds, is a noble principle; I have known the happiest effects produced by it; I never knew it to be productive of any vice. In all public schools it is, or ought to be, carefully cherished. Where it is wanting, in vain shall we preach up to children the dignity and utility of knowledge: the true appetite for knowledge is wanting; and when that is the case, whatever is crammed into the memory will rather surfeit and enfeeble, than improve the understanding. I do not mention the pleasure which young people take in the company of one another, and what a pity it is to deprive them of it. I need not remark, that friendships of the utmost stability and importance have often been founded on school-acquaintance; nor need I put you in mind, of what vast consequence to health are the exercises and amusements which boys contrive for themselves. I shall only observe further, that, when boys pursue their studies at home, they are apt to contract either a habit of idleness, or too close an attachment to reading; the former breeds innumerable diseases, both in the body and soul; the latter, by filling young and tender minds with more knowledge than they can either retain or arrange properly, is apt to make them superficial and inattentive, or, what is worse, to strain, and consequently impair, the faculties, by over-stretching them. I have known several instances of both. The human mind is more improved by thoroughly understanding one science, one part of a science, or even one subject, than by a superficial knowledge of twenty sciences and a hundred different subjects: and I would rather wish my son to be thoroughly master of "Euclid's Elements," than to have the whole of "Chambers' Dictionary" by heart.

"The great inconvenience of public education arises from its being dangerous to morals. And indeed every condition and period of human life is liable to temptation. Nor will I deny, that our innocence, during the first part of life, is much more secure at home, than any where else; yet even at home, when we reach a certain age, it is not perfectly secure. Let young men be kept at the greatest distance from bad company, it will not be easy to keep them from bad books, to which in these days, all persons may have

easy access at all times. Let us, however, suppose the best; that both bad books and bad company keep away, and that the young man never leaves his parents' or tutor's side, till his mind be well furnished with good principles, and himself arrived at the age of reflection and caution: yet temptations must come at last; and when they come, will they have the less strength, because they are new, unexpected, and surprising? I fear not. The more the young man is surprised, the more apt will he be to lose his presence of mind, and consequently the less capable of self-government. Besides, if his passions are strong, he will be disposed to form comparisons between his past state of restraint, and his present of liberty, very much to the disadvantage of the former. His new associates will laugh at him for his reserve and preciseness; and his unacquaintance with their manners, and with the world, as it will render him the more obnoxious to their ridicule, will also disqualify him the more, both for supporting it with dignity, and also for defending himself against it. Suppose him to be shocked with vice at its first appearance, and often to call to mind the good precepts he received in his early days; yet when he sees others daily adventuring upon it without any apparent inconvenience; when he sees them more gay (to appearance), and better received among all their acquaintance than he is; and when he finds himself hooted at, and in a manner avoided and despised, on account of his singularity; it is a wonder indeed, if he persist in his first resolutions, and do not now at last begin to think, that though his former teachers were well-meaning people, they were by no means qualified to prescribe rules for his conduct. "The world (he will say) is changed since their time (and you will not easily persuade young people that it changes for the worse): we must comply with the fashion, and live like other folks, otherwise we must give up all hopes of making a figure in it." And when he has got thus far, and begins to despise the opinions of his instructors, and to be dissatisfied with their conduct in regard to him, I need not add, that the worst consequences may not unreasonably be apprehended. A young man, kept by himself at home, is never well known, even by his parents; because he is never placed in those circumstances which alone are able effectually to rouse and interest his passions, and consequently to make his character appear. His parents, therefore, or tutors, never know his weak side, nor what particular advices or cautions he

stands most in need of; whereas, if he had attended a public school, and mingled in the amusements and pursuits of his equals, his virtues and his vices would have been disclosing themselves every day; and his teachers would have known what particular precepts and examples it was most expedient to inculcate upon him. Compare those who have had a public education with those who have been educated at home; and it will not be found, in fact, that the latter are, either in virtue or in talents, superior to the former. I speak, Madam, from observation of fact, as well as from attending to the nature of the thing."

So rapid was the sale of the "Essay on Truth," that a second edition was published early in the year 1771. In this edition he made several corrections and improvements; and he subjoined a postscript (he meant it at first for a preface), the rough draft of which he was pleased to submit to the judgment of Dr Gregory, Mr Arbuthnot, and me. He mentions this in the following letter.

LETTER XLI.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 28th January, 1771.

"IN preparing corrections and a preface for the second edition of my essay, I have laboured so hard these two months, that I had time to think of nothing else. The former were finished three weeks ago; and of the latter I have sent you, with this, a complete copy. I must beg of you and Dr Gregory, and Mr Arbuthnot, to set apart an hour or two, as soon as possible, to revise this discourse, and mark what you would wish to be changed or altered; for I will be entirely determined by your judgment and theirs; and I do not propose to consult, on the present occasion, with any other persons. I beg you will be very free in your censures, as I would not wish to

say any thing exceptionable; at the same time, you will see by the strain of the whole, that I want to express some things as clearly and strongly as possible, and to shew that my zeal is not in the least abated. The printing of the second edition goes briskly on."

His three friends, to whom he had thus committed the important trust of judging of the style and execution of his postscript, could not but remark, that the warmth of his zeal in the cause of truth, and his desire to vindicate himself from some attacks which had been made upon him, as he conceived most unjustly, had led him to express himself, in some instances, with a degree of acrimony which they thought had better be corrected. And they did not scruple to state to him their sentiments on this head, with the freedom which friendship permitted, and which the trust, he had done them the honour to repose in them, fully demanded. With what candour, with what kindness, Dr Beattie received their observations on this intended addition to his essay, will appear from the following letter.

LETTER XLII.

DR BEATTIE TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 12th February, 1771.

"IT is not in your power, my dear sir, or Sir William Forbes's, or Dr Gregory's, to offend me on any occasion. Your remonstrances on the present occasion, against my preface, are so far from offending me, that I consider them as a most striking instance of the sincerest friendship; and as such I should receive from them a great deal of pleasure, unmixed with any pain, if it were not for the trouble and uneasiness which I know you must have felt on my account. I am distressed, too, at the thought of having taken up so much of your time; Dr Gregory, in particular,

has too much cause to complain of me in this respect. As I well know the value of his time, you will readily believe that I cannot be entirely at ease, when I reflect on my having been the cause of his writing a letter of twelve quarto pages. All I can say for myself, is, that I did not intend to give my friends so much trouble; for, though I sent them my preface as I first wrote it, *with all its imperfections on its head*, and though I knew they would object to several passages in it, I never expected nor wished them to do more than just to mark the exceptionable parts with their pen, which would have fully satisfied me, as I had determined to follow their advice *implicitly* in every thing.

"I hope I have, in my introduction, done justice to Mr Hume as a man, and as a historian: I certainly meant it at least. I have finished a draught of a new preface (postscript I shall henceforth call it); it will be sent to Sir William Forbes when finished. You must once more take the trouble to read it over; I hope you will find nothing to blame in it, for I struck out or altered every thing that Dr Gregory marked or objected to, and many things besides. But lest there should still be any thing wrong, I will invest my friends with a dictatorial power to expunge every thing they do not like."

In the following letter, Dr Gregory has placed in the most proper point of view, the accusation brought by the friends of Mr Hume against Dr Beattie, of having, in his "Essay on Truth," treated the principles of the sceptical philosophy with too much asperity.

LETTER XLIII.

DR JOHN GREGORY TO DR BEATTIE.

Edinburgh, 26th November, 1771.

"I HAVE no objection to your marginal note.* But I think the reason of the warmth with which you write should be strongly pointed out, and as concisely as possible. It has been said here, that you had written with great heat and asperity against Mr Hume, because you differed from him about some metaphysical subtleties, of no material consequence to mankind. This is alleged by those who never read your book, and seem never to have read Mr Hume's. You write with warmth against him, because he has endeavoured to invalidate every argument brought to prove the existence of a Supreme Being; because he has endeavoured to invalidate every argument in favour of a future state of existence; and because he has endeavoured to destroy the distinction between moral good and evil. You do not treat him with severity, because he is a bad metaphysician, but because he has expressly applied his metaphysics to the above unworthy purposes. If he has not been guilty of this; if these are only conclusions, which you yourself draw, by implication, from his writings, but conclusions which he himself disavows, then you are in the wrong; you ought to ask pardon of him, and of the public, for your mistaken zeal. But I have never heard that he, or any of his friends, have pretended, that you do him injustice in these respects. After all, I wish, for the future, that you would rather employ your wit and humour, of which you have so large a share, against these people, in the way that Addison, Pope, Swift, and Arbuthnot did. It would mortify them beyond any thing that can be said against them in the way of reasoning."

Very soon after the publication of the second edition of the "Essay on Truth," Dr Beattie published the first canto of the

* What the note here alluded to was, does not appear. It was probably some marginal note on the MS. of his postscript, then under consideration.

"Minstrel." It was printed without his name, because, as he said, it was an imperfect sketch, being only a first part.*

The very great number of editions through which this beautiful poem has passed, is a decisive proof of its merit. It is, indeed, in the hands of every reader of taste, and is therefore so universally known and admired, that it is scarcely necessary to say any thing farther in its commendation. The author tells us, in an advertisement prefixed to the first canto, that he took the idea of this poem originally from Dr Percy's (the bishop of Dromore's) "Essay "on the English Minstrelsy," prefixed to the first volume of "Re-"liques of ancient English Poetry," published in the year 1765. His design, he says, was to trace the progress of a poetical genius, born in a rude age, from the first dawning of fancy and reason, till that period at which he may be supposed capable of appearing in the world as a "Minstrel," that is, as an itinerant poet and musician—a character which, according to the notions of our forefathers, was not only respectable, but sacred.†

He has endeavoured, he adds, to imitate Spenser in the measure of his verse, and in the harmony, simplicity, and variety of his composition. Antiquated expressions he has avoided; admitting, however, some old words, where they seemed to suit the subject: but none, he hopes, will be found that are now obsolete, or in any degree not intelligible to a reader of English poetry.

To those who may be disposed to ask, what could induce him to write in so difficult a measure, he says, he can only answer, that it pleased his ear, and seemed, from its Gothic structure and original, to bear some relation to the subject and spirit of the poem. It admits both simplicity and magnificence of sound and language, beyond any other stanza that he was acquainted with. It allows the sententiousness of the couplet, as well as the more complex modulation of blank verse. What some critics have remarked of its uniformity growing at last tiresome to the ear, will be found to hold true, only when the poetry is faulty in other respects.‡

* The second canto was published, together with a new edition of the first, in the year 1774, and with the addition of his name.

† Preface to the Minstrel, ed. 1771.

‡ Preface to the Minstrel, ed. 1771.

Of all Dr Beattie's poetical works, the "Minstrel" is, beyond all question, the best, whether we consider the plan or the execution. The language is extremely elegant, the versification harmonious; it exhibits the richest poetic imagery, with a delightful flow of the most sublime, delicate, and pathetic sentiment. It breathes the spirit of the purest virtue, the soundest philosophy, and the most exquisite taste. In a word, it is at once highly conceived and admirably finished.

The success of the "Minstrel" was equal to the warmest wishes of the author and his friends. It was received well by the public, and it met with much and just commendation from some of the best judges of poetical composition in the island. Of these, the highest praise Dr Beattie's "Minstrel" ever received, was from the first Lord Lyttelton, in a letter from that excellent man and elegant critic, to Mrs Montagu, who had put the "Minstrel" into his hands on the publication of the first canto.

LETTER XLIV.

LORD LYTTELTON TO MRS MONTAGU.

Hill-Street, 8th March, 1771.

"I READ your 'Minstrel' last night, with as much rapture as poetry, in her noblest, sweetest charms, ever raised in my soul. It seemed to me, that my once most beloved minstrel, Thomson, was come down from heaven, refined by the converse of purer spirits than those he lived with here, to let me hear him sing again the beauties of nature, and the finest feelings of virtue, not with human, but with angelic strains! I beg you to express my gratitude to the poet for the pleasure he has given me. Your eloquence alone can do justice to my sense of his admirable genius, and the excellent use he makes of it. Would it were in my power to do him any service!"

The letter from the friend to whom I owe the communication of this valuable manuscript of Lord Lyttelton's, contains an ob-

servation on it so extremely just, that I cannot resist the desire of transcribing it here.

"I am very happy," says my friend,* "to be able to send Lord "Lyttelton's letter on the subject of the 'Minstrel.' It was writ- "ten upon his first perusal of the first canto, and to a person to "whom his heart was open. It is very seldom that the world can "see *so near* the first impression of a work of genius on a cultivated "mind; and I do not know any thing that Lord Lyttelton has "written, that so strongly marks the sensibility and purity of his "taste. The allusion to Thomson is singularly affecting, and con- "stitutes the finest praise that ever was bestowed on a poet."

This letter of Lord Lyttelton's, Mrs Montagu transmitted to the late Dr Gregory; well knowing how much he would be gratified by such emphatic praise of his friend Dr Beattie, from so exquisite a judge of poetic merit as Lord Lyttelton.

Mrs Montagu's own letter contains some valuable strictures on poetical composition in general, which, I think the reader will thank me for inserting here.

LETTER XLV.

MRS MONTAGU TO DR JOHN GREGORY.

London, 13th March, 1771.

"I KEEP as much out of the whirling vortex of the world as I can. Sometimes I am caught up for a day, but settle into tranquillity the next. I am charmed with the "Minstrel," and have circulated its fame. I have enclosed a note, by which you will see how much it pleased Lord Lyttelton. I have sent one into the country to Lord Chatham; and I wrote immediately to a person who serves many gentlemen and ladies with new books, to recom-

* The Reverend Mr Alison, Rector of Rodington, and Vicar of High Ercal, and Prebendary of Salisbury, whose elegant and classical "Essays "on the Nature and Principles of Taste," give us cause to regret that he does not write more. I have had the happiness, many years, of the intimate acquaintance and friendship of Mr Alison.

mend it to all people of taste. I am very sorry the second edition of Dr Beattie's book is not yet in town. I have recommended it, too, to many of our Bishops, and others; but all have complained this whole winter, that the booksellers deny having any of either the first or second edition. I wish you would intimate this to Dr Beattie. I dare say many hundreds would have been sold if people could have got them. I would advise, that the book and poem might be frequently advertised. I recommended the poem this morning to Dr Percy,* who was much pleased to hear that Dr Beattie had so kindly mentioned him. I admire all the poet tells us of the infancy of the bard; but I should not have been so well satisfied, if he had not intended to give us the history of his life. General reflections, natural sentiments, representations of the passions, are things addressed to the understanding. A poet should aim at touching the heart. Strong sympathies are to be excited, and deep impressions only to be made, by interesting us for an individual; and the poet, who is a maker, as well as a tailor is,

> For real Kate should make the boddice,
> And not for an ideal goddess.

I am sure the reason why few, even among the lovers of belles lettres, can bear to read Spenser, is, that they cannot sympathise with imaginary beings. Our esteem of Sir Guyon, our love of Sir Calidore, our veneration for Arthur, is faint and uncertain. We are not convinced of their existence, nor acquainted with their general characters and conditions; all the sympathies with creatures of our own nature and condition are wanting. I assure you, every one is charmed with the "Minstrel."

At the same time, and of the same date with this excellent letter of Lord Lyttelton's, Dr Beattie received one from Mr Gray, with a very minute and copious criticism on the first canto of the "Minstrel," which I shall insert here. I have also in my possession a paper, in Dr Beattie's hand-writing, containing his own remarks on those criticisms of Mr Gray's. It is curious, as well as

* The present Lord Bishop of Dromore, editor of "Reliques of ancient "English Poetry," which first suggested to Dr Beattie the idea of the "Minstrel."

instructive, and it must afford pleasure to every reader of classical taste, to compare the remarks and observations of two poets of such real genius, on this beautiful poem. I shall, therefore, give Mr Gray's letter in the text, and shall subjoin, by way of notes, Dr Beattie's remarks on Mr Gray's observations.

LETTER XLVI.

MR GRAY TO DR BEATTIE.

Cambridge, 8th March, 1771.

"THE 'Minstrel' came safe to my hands, and I return you my sincere thanks for so acceptable a present; in return I shall give you my undisguised opinion of him, as he proceeds, without considering to whom he owes his birth, and sometimes without specifying my reasons; either because they would lead me too far, or because I may not always know what they are myself.

"I think we should wholly adopt the language of Spenser's time, or wholly renounce it. You say, you have done the latter; but, in effect, you retain *fared, forth, meed, wight, ween, gaude, shene, in sooth, aye, eschew*, &c. obsolete words, at least in these parts of the island, and only known to those that read our ancient authors, or such as imitate them.*

"St. 2. v. 5. The *obstreperous* trump of fame hurts my ear, though meant to express a jarring sound.

"St. 3. v. 6. *And from his bending*, &c. the grammar seems deficient: yet as the mind easily fills up the ellipsis, perhaps it is an atticism, and not inelegant.

"St. 4. and ult. *Pensions, posts, and praise.* I cannot reconcile myself to this, nor to the whole following stanza; especially *the plaister of thy hair.*†

* *To fare*, i. e. *to go*, says Dr Beattie, is used in "Pope's Odyssey," and so is *meed*; *wight* (in a serious sense) is used by Milton and Dryden. *Ween* is used by Milton; *gaude* by Dryden; *shene* by Milton; *eschew* by Atterbury; *aye* by Milton. The poetical style in every nation (where there is a poetical style) abounds in old words.

† I did not intend a poem uniformly epical and solemn; but one rather that might be lyrical, or even satirical, upon occasion.

"*Surely the female heart*, &c. St. 6. The thought is not just. We cannot justify the sex from the conduct of the Muses, who are only females by the help of Greek mythology; and then, again, how should they bow the knee in the fane of a Hebrew or Philistine devil? Besides, I am the more severe, because it serves to introduce what I most admire.*

"St. 7. *Rise, sons of harmony*, &c. This is charming; the thought and the expression. I will not be so hypercritical as to add, but it is *lyrical*, and therefore belongs to a different species of poetry. Rules are but chains, good for little, except when one can break through them; and what is fine gives me so much pleasure, that I never regard what place it is in.

"St. 8, 9, 10. All this thought is well and freely handled, particularly, *Here peaceful are the vales*, &c. *Know thine own worth*, &c. *Canst thou forego*, &c.

St. 11. *O, how canst thou renounce*, &c. But this, of all others, is my favourite stanza. It is true poetry; it is inspiration; only (to shew it is mortal) there is one blemish; the word *garniture* suggesting an idea of dress, and what is worse, of French dress.†

"St. 12. Very well. *Prompting th' ungenerous wish*, &c. But do not say *rambling muse; wandering, or devious*, if you please.‡

"St. 13. *A nation fam'd*, &c. I like this compliment to your country; the simplicity, too, of the following narrative: only in st. 17. the words *artless* and *simple* are too synonymous to come so near each other.

"St. 18. *And yet poor Edwin*, &c. This is all excellent, and comes very near the level of st. 11. in my esteem; only, perhaps, *And some believed him mad*, falls a little too flat, and rather below simplicity.

* I meant here an ironical argument. Perhaps, however, the irony is wrong placed. Mammon has now come to signify *wealth* or *riches*, without any regard to its original meaning.

† I have often wished to alter this same word, but have not yet been able to hit upon a better.

‡ Wandering happens to be in the last line of the next stanza, save one, otherwise it would certainly have been here.

"St. 21. *Ah, no!* By the way, this sort of interjection is rather too frequent with you, and will grow characteristic, if you do not avoid it.

"In that part of the poem which you sent me before, you have altered several little particulars much for the better.*

"St. 34. I believe I took notice before of this excess of alliteration. *Long, loaded, loud,* lament, *lonely,* lighted, *lingering, listening;* though the verses are otherwise very good, it looks like affectation.†

"St. 36, 37, 38. Sure you go too far in lengthening a stroke of Edwin's character and disposition into a direct narrative, as of a fact. In the mean time, the poem stands still, and the reader grows impatient. Do you not, in general, indulge a little too much in *description* and *reflection?* This is not my remark only, I have heard it observed by others; and I take notice of it here, because *these* are among the stanzas that might be spared; they are good, nevertheless, and might be laid by, and employed elsewhere to advantage.‡

"St. 42. Spite of what I have just now said, this digression pleases me so well, that I cannot spare it.

"St. 46. v. ult. The *infuriate* flood. I would not make new words without great necessity; it is very hazardous at best."§

* I had sent Mr Gray from st. 23. to st. 39. by way of specimen.

† It does so, and yet it is not affected. I have endeavoured once and again to clear this passage of those obnoxious letters, but I never could please myself. Alliteration has great authorities on its side, but I would never seek for it; nay, except on some very particular occasions, I would rather avoid it. When Mr Gray, once before, told me of my propensity to alliteration, I repeated to him one of his own lines, which is indeed one of the finest in poetry—

Nor cast one longing lingering look behind.

‡ This remark is perfectly just. All I can say is, that I meant, from the beginning to take some latitude in the composition of this poem, and not confine myself to the epical rules for narrative. In an epic poem these digressions, and reflections, &c. would be unpardonable.

§ I would as soon make new coin, as knowingly make a new word, except I were to invent any art or science where they would be necessary. *Infuriate* is used by Thomson—*Summer,* 1096. and, which is much better authority, by Milton. *Par. Lost,* b. vi. v. 487.

"St. 49, 50, 51, 52. All this is very good; but *medium* and *incongruous*, being words of art, lose their dignity in my eyes, and savour too much of prose. I would have read the last line—'Presumptuous child of dust, be humble and be wise.' But, on second thoughts, perhaps—'*For thou art but of dust*'—is better and more solemn, from its simplicity.

"St. 53. *Where dark*, &c. You return again to the charge. Had you not said enough before?*

"St. 54. *Nor was this ancient dame*, &c. Consider, she has not been mentioned for these six stanzas backward.

"St. 56. v. 5. *The vernal day*. With us it rarely thunders in the spring, but in the summer frequently.†

"St. 57, 58. Very pleasing, and has much the rhythm and expression of Milton in his youth. The last four lines strike me less by far.

"St. 59. The first five lines charming. Might not the mind of your conqueror be checked and softened in the mid-career of his successes by some domestic misfortune (introduced by way of episode, interesting and new, but not too long), that Edwin's music and its triumphs may be a little prepared, and more consistent with probability?‡

"I am happy to hear of your successes in another way, because I think you are serving the cause of human nature, and the true interests of mankind. Your book is read here too, and with just applause."§

It is also a matter of some curiosity to compare the first with the second edition of the same canto of the "Minstrel," in order to

* What I said before referred only to sophists perverting the truth; this alludes to the method by which they pervert it.

† It sometimes thunders in the latter part of spring. *Sultry day* would be an improvement perhaps.

‡ This is an excellent hint; it refers to something I had been saying in my last letter to Mr Gray, respecting the plan of what remains of the "Minstrel."

§ Mr Gray has been very particular. I am greatly obliged to him for the freedom of his remarks, and think myself as much so for his objections as for his commendations.

see where Dr Beattie has followed Mr Gray's opinion, and where he has adhered to his own. In order to save the reader the trouble of making this comparison, I have subjoined it in the Appendix.*

"The want of incident in the "Minstrel" has often been regretted; and all that can be said, in excuse for the deficiency, is, that the poem, as we now have it, is unfinished. On my once asking Dr Beattie, in what manner he had intended to employ his "Minstrel," had he completed his original design, of extending the poem to a third canto, he said, he proposed to have introduced a foreign enemy, as invading his country, in consequence of which the "Minstrel" was to employ himself in rousing his countrymen to arms.† It is easy to see how interesting such a plan must have become in the hands of such a poet as Dr Beattie.

In the first edition, this poem was dedicated to a male friend, although the name be left blank.‡ In the second edition, Mrs Montagu's name was inserted in the concluding stanza.

It is somewhat remarkable, that, although, in deference to Mr Gray's opinion, Dr Beattie has made some alterations in the second edition, which must readily be allowed to be extremely judicious, yet he has not, I think, made a single alteration in the first canto, except where suggested by Mr Gray. And in the second canto he has changed nothing, except *mild* for *wild* § in the 6th stanza, and inserting the 34th, which was not in the first edition of that canto.

Mr Gray died a few months after writing this letter, consequently before the publication of the second canto, which may be justly matter of regret, as his criticisms might have improved it, as well as the former.

Those who read the "Minstrel," on its first appearance, and were acquainted, either personally, or by report, with the genius and character of the author, were instantly led to believe, that, in his description of *Edwin*, he had it in view to give his own portrait. A letter which he wrote to the Dowager Lady Forbes, in answer to one from her, in which this idea had been suggested, confirmed the

* See Appendix, [T.]

† He hints at this plan, in a letter to Dr Blacklock, p. 71.

‡ Our common friend, Mr Arbuthnot.

§ Which, probably, had been merely a typographical error.

opinion. As this letter contains also some striking sentiments on poetical composition, it must be very interesting to every reader of taste.

LETTER XLVII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE DOWAGER LADY FORBES.*

Aberdeen, 12th October, 1772.

"I WISH the merit of the 'Minstrel' were such as would justify all the kind things you have said of it. That it has merit every body would think me a hypocrite if I were to deny; I am willing to believe that it has even considerable merit; and I acknowledge, with much gratitude, that it has obtained from the public a reception far more favourable than I expected. There are in it many passages, no doubt, which I admire more than others do; and perhaps there are some passages which others are more struck with than I am. In all poetry this, I believe, is the case, more or less; but it is much more the case in poems of a sentimental cast, such as the 'Minstrel' is, than in those of the narrative species. In epic and dramatic poesy there is a standard acknowledged, by which we may estimate the merit of the piece; whether the narrative be probable, and the characters well-drawn and well preserved; whether all the events be conducive to the catastrophe; whether the action is unfolded in such a way as to command perpetual attention, and undiminished curiosity—these are points of which, in reading an epic poem, or tragedy, every reader possessed of good sense, or tolerable knowledge of the art, may hold himself to be a competent judge. Common life, and the general tenor of human affairs, is the standard to which these points may be referred, and according to which they may be estimated. But of sentimental poetry (if I may use the expression), there is no external standard. By it the heart of the reader must be touched at once, or it cannot be touched at all. Here the knowledge of critical rules, and a general acquaintance of human affairs, will not form a true critic; sensibility, and a lively imagination, are the qualities which alone con-

* Mrs Dorothea Dale, widow of the Right Hon. William Lord Forbes.

stitute a true taste for sentimental poetry. Again, your ladyship must have observed, that some sentiments are common to all men; others peculiar to persons of a certain character. Of the former sort are those which Gray has so elegantly expressed in his 'Church-yard Elegy,' a poem which is universally understood and admired, not only for its poetical beauties, but also, and perhaps chiefly, for its expressing sentiments in which every man thinks himself interested, and which, at certain times, are familiar to all men. Now the sentiments, expressed in the 'Minstrel,' being not common to all men, but peculiar to persons of a certain cast, cannot possibly be interesting, because the generality of readers will not understand nor feel them so thoroughly as to think them natural. That a boy should take pleasure in darkness or a storm, in the noise of thunder, or the glare of lightning; should be more gratified with listening to music at a distance, than with mixing in the merriment occasioned by it; should like better to see every bird and beast happy and free, than to exert his ingenuity in destroying or ensnaring them—these, and such like sentiments, which, I think, would be natural to persons of a certain cast, will, I know, be condemned as unnatural by others, who have never felt them in themselves, nor observed them in the generality of mankind. Of all this I was sufficiently aware before I published the "Minstrel," and, therefore, never expected that it would be a popular poem.* Perhaps, too, the structure of the verse (which, though agreeable to some, is not to all) and the scarcity of incidents, may contribute to make it less relished, than it would have been, if the plan had been different in these particulars.

"From the questions your Ladyship is pleased to propose in the conclusion of your letter, as well as from some things I have had the honour to hear you advance in conversation, I find you are willing to suppose, that, in Edwin, I have given only a picture of myself, as I was in my younger days. I confess the supposition is not groundless. I have made him take pleasure in the scenes in which I took pleasure, and entertain sentiments similar to those, of which, even in my early youth, I had repeated experience. The scenery of a mountainous country, the ocean, the sky, thoughtful-

* It is curious to remark, how much Dr Beattie was mistaken in this respect, with regard to the "Minstrel," as well as his "Essay on Truth." See p. 93.

ness and retirement, and sometimes melancholy objects and ideas, had charms in my eyes, even when I was a school-boy;* and at a time when I was so far from being able to express, that I did not understand, my own feelings, or perceive the tendency of such pursuits and amusements; and as to poetry and music, before I was ten years old, I could play a little on the violin, and was as much master of Homer and Virgil, as Pope's and Dryden's translations could make me. But I am ashamed to write so much on a subject so trifling as myself, and my own works. Believe me, madam, nothing but your Ladyship's commands could have induced me to do it."

Dr Beattie's health had suffered so severely from the intense application of thought, which he had bestowed in the composing, revising, and correcting his "Essay on Truth," that exercise and change of air were recommended to him by his physicians. As he had heard much of the favourable reception his book had met with in England, perhaps he was not displeased with having an opportunity of again visiting London, not as on the former occasion, when he was nearly unknown there, even by name; but now that he had emerged from obscurity, and had reason to hope that the reputation he had acquired, as the successful champion of truth, and the decided enemy of sophistry and scepticism, would procure for him the notice of some respectable characters, whose acquaintance might, at some future period, be of much service to him.

He accordingly went to London in the beginning of autumn 1771. He was already known by character to several of those with whom he afterwards became personally acquainted, and he carried with him some respectable letters of introduction, by means of which he was received in the most favourable manner. In particular, he owed to the late Dr Gregory his personal acquaintance with Mrs Montagu, who, as has been seen, although they had never met, was already much prepossessed in his favour. Mrs Montagu not only honoured him with her friendship, of which she gave him many substantial proofs, and continued to carry on an epistolary correspondence with him to the close of her life; but at her house,

* See p. 14.

he had the fortunate opportunity of meeting with, and becoming known to, some of the most eminent characters of that period. It is well known, that Mrs Montagu's house was, at that time, the chosen resort of many of those, of both sexes, most distinguished for rank, as well as classical taste and literary talent in London.* In

* Mrs Elizabeth Robinson, daughter of ———— Robinson, Esq. of Horton, in the county of Kent, and wife of Edward Montagu, Esq. of Denton-hall, in Northumberland, and Sandleford Priory, in Berkshire. Inheriting from nature a genius for literature, she had the good fortune to meet with an able director of her early studies, in the celebrated Dr Conyers Middleton, who was married to her grandmother, with whom she lived. Under his tuition, she acquired that learning, and formed that taste, which was so conspicuous throughout the whole of her subsequent life. Mrs Montagu had early distinguished herself as an author, first, by three dialogues of the dead, published along with Lord Lyttelton's; afterwards by her classical and elegant "Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespeare;" in which she amply vindicated our great national dramatist from the gross, illiberal, and ignorant abuse, thrown out against him by Voltaire. The elegance of her manners, the brilliancy of her wit, and the sprightliness of her conversation, attracted to her house those who were most distinguished by their learning, their taste, and reputation as literary characters. This society of eminent friends, who met frequently at Mrs Montagu's, for the sole purpose of conversation, differed in no respect from other parties, but that the company did not play at cards. It consisted originally of Mrs Montagu, Mrs Vesey, Mrs Boscawen, and Mrs Carter, Lord Lyttelton, the Earl of Bath, (better known as Mr Pulteney) Horace Walpole, the classical owner of Strawberry Hill, afterwards Earl of Orford, and Mr Stillingfleet. The society came at last to contain a numerous assemblage of those most eminent for literature in London, or who visited it. Of these distinguished friends, Mrs Vesey, though less known than Mrs Montagu, was also another centre of pleasing and rational society. Without attempting to shine herself, she had the happy secret of bringing forward talents of every kind, and of diffusing over the society, the gentleness of her own character. She was the daughter of an Irish bishop, and wife of Agmondesham Vesey, Esq. a gentleman of Ireland, who, in his earlier years, had been the friend of Swift. Mrs Boscawen was the widow of the gallant admiral of that name, a woman of great talents, and, though unknown to the literary world, acceptable to every society, by the strength of her understanding, the poignancy of her humour, and the brilliancy of her wit. She died in the spring of 1805, at the advanced age of eighty-six. Mrs Carter, the learned translator of Epictetus, and the author of a volume of poems of very considerable merit, is now the only original surviving member, at the age of nearly ninety. But the gentleman to whom this constellation of talents owed that whimsical appellation, the "Bas Bleu,"

particular, Dr Beattie met at Mrs Montagu's with Lord Lyttelton, to whose high commendation of the "Essay on Truth," and the "Minstrel," he had been so eminently indebted. For that distinguished nobleman Dr Beattie retained ever after the highest respect and veneration; and I have often heard him dwell with enthusiasm and delight on those more private parties, into which he had had the happiness of being admitted, at Mrs Montagu's, consisting of Lord Lyttelton, Mrs Carter, and one or two other most intimate

was Mr Stillingfleet, a man of great piety and worth, the author of some works in natural history, and of some poetical pieces in "Dodsley's Collec-
"tion." Mr Stillingfleet being somewhat of an humourist in his habits and manners, and a little negligent in his dress, literally wore grey stockings, from which circumstance, Admiral Boscawen used, by way of pleasantry, to call them the "Blue-Stocking Society;" as if to indicate, that when these brilliant friends met, it was not for the purpose of forming a dressed assembly. A foreigner of distinction hearing the expression, translated it literally, "Bas Bleu," by which these meetings came to be afterwards distinguished.

Mrs Hannah More,* who was herself a distinguished member of the society, has written an admirable poem, with the title of the "Bas Bleu," in allusion to this mistake of the foreigner, in which she has characterised most of the eminent personages of which it was composed. The concluding part of her prefatory memorandum to the poem, is so very apposite to my present purpose, that I cannot resist the temptation of inserting it here.

"May the author be permitted to bear her grateful testimony, which will "not be suspected of flattery, now that most of the persons named in this "poem are gone down to the grave, to the many pleasant and instructive "hours she had the honour to pass in this company, in which learning was as "little disfigured by pedantry; good taste as little tinctured by affectation; "and general conversation as little disgraced by calumny, levity, and the "other censurable errors with which it is too commonly tainted, as has per-"haps been known in any society."—*Works of Mrs H. More*, vol. i. p. 12.

Mrs Montagu being left, by the will of her husband, in possession of his noble fortune, lived in a style of the most splendid hospitality, till her death, which happened at an advanced age, 25th August, 1800.

I had first the happiness of being acquainted with Mrs Montagu in the year 1766, when she passed some time on a visit to the late Dr Gregory at Edinburgh, at whose house I saw her almost every day. Ever after, when I occasionally passed some time in London, she was pleased, in a particular manner, to honour me with the most polite and gratifying attention.

* The excellent Author of "Strictures on Female Education," "Thoughts on the Impor-
"tance of the Manners of the Great to General Society," and an "Estimate of the Religion of
"the Fashionable World," with other pieces.

friends, who spent their evenings in an unreserved interchange of thoughts, sometimes on critical and literary subjects, sometimes on those of the most serious and interesting nature.

How delighted he was with his reception on this occasion in London, will be seen from the following letters to his friends.

LETTER XLVIII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. MR WILLIAMSON.

London, 8th September, 1771.

"I NEED not tell you how much it affects me to hear, that I cannot have the pleasure of seeing you in England. I hoped it might have been otherwise, and my hopes were sanguine: but I am satisfied with your reasons, and am willing to suppose, with you, that one time or other we may meet again, even in this country. My health, though much improved since I left Scotland, is not so well established as to enable me to write a long letter; otherwise I have ten thousand things to tell you, in which I know you would be much interested. My spirits, which, when I came from home, were at the very lowest, are now raised again near to their usual pitch: for I have been as dissipated as possible of late, and have neither read nor written any thing (except now and then a very short letter) these two months. Indeed the physicians do expressly prohibit both.

"I have been here five weeks, and shall probably continue a week or two longer. I have been extremely happy in making a great many very agreeable and very creditable acquaintance. Dr Hawkesworth, Dr Armstrong, Mr Garrick, Dr Samuel Johnson, and several others of note, have treated me, not only with politeness, but with a degree of attention and kindness that equals my warmest wishes. I wish I had longer time to pass among them; I shall find it no easy matter to force myself away. Johnson has been greatly misrepresented. I have passed several entire days with

him, and found him extremely agreeable. The compliments he pays to my writings are so high, that I have not the face to mention them. Every body I have conversed with on the subject (among whom I have the honour to reckon Lord Mansfield), approves of what I have done in respect to Mr Hume; and none of them have been able to find any personal abuse, any course expressions, or even any indelicacy, in what I have written against him: so you see I have no great reason to value what my Scottish enemies say against me. This I mention to you, because I know it will give you pleasure.

"A letter from Utrecht, which I received since I came here, informs me, that three translations of my Essay, a French, a Dutch, and a German, will appear next winter. Some of them are now at the press."

LETTER XLIX.

THE REV. MR MASON* TO DR BEATTIE.

York, 17th October, 1771.

"IN my late melancholy employment of reviewing and arranging the papers, which dear Mr Gray's friendship bequeathed to my care, I have found nine letters of yours, which I meant to have returned ere this, had I found a safe opportunity by a private hand; but as no such opportunity has yet occurred, I take the liberty of troubling you with this, to enquire how I may best convey them to you. I shall continue in my residence here† till the 12th of next month, and hope in that interval to be favoured with a line from you upon this subject.

"I should deprive myself of a very sincere gratification, if I finished this letter, with the business that occasions it. You must

* Rector of Aston in Yorkshire, the well-known author of "Caractacus," "Elfrida," and other esteemed pieces, and the chosen friend of Gray.

† Mr Mason was precentor of the Cathedral of York, an office, which, from its name, probably gave him the direction of the choir.

suffer me to thank you for the very high degree of poetical pleasure which the first book of your "Minstrel" gave my imagination, and that equal degree of rational conviction which your "Essay on "the Immutability of Truth" impressed on my understanding. I will freely own to you, that the very idea of a Scotsman's attacking Mr Hume prejudiced me so much in favour of the latter piece, that I should have approved it, if, instead of a masterly, it had been only a moderate performance.

"I shall be happy to know, that the remaining books of your "Minstrel" are likewise to be published soon. The next best thing, after instructing the world profitably, is to amuse it innocently. England has lost that man,* who, of all others in it, was best qualified for both these purposes; but who, from early chagrin and disappointment, had imbibed a disinclination to employ his talents beyond the sphere of self-satisfaction and improvement. May Scotland long possess, in you, a person both qualified and willing to exert his, for the pleasure and benefit of society."

LETTER L.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. MR WILLIAMSON.

Aberdeen, 22d December, 1771.

"ON my return from London, I passed through Cambridge; but had not the heart to stay longer than to dine, and see some of the principal curiosities. Mr Gray's death ran too much in my head. He has left all his papers to Mr Mason, from whom I have lately had two very obliging letters. He had found several letters of mine to Mr Gray; and wrote to me, desiring to know what he should do with them; paying me, at the same time, some very handsome compliments on the score of my "Essay" and "Minstrel." In answer, I asked the favour that he would acquaint me what papers in the poetical way Mr Gray had left; and he has given me a very particular detail of them, and a character of each,

* Mr Gray.

and offers me the perusal of any of them I wish to see. There is an epitaph on a friend, a sonnet in Petrarch's manner, an address to the engraver who published the prints annexed to the folio edition of his poems. These are finished, and all of them excellent. There is a fragment of a tragedy; a part of an essay, in verse of ten syllables, on the influence of government and education on human happiness, finished as far as it goes, viz. 107 lines, in the highest manner; part of an ode on the vicissitude of the seasons; several other imperfect pieces; and some Latin poems. Mr Mason has not yet determined what pieces he shall publish. I fancy the public would wish to see them all, and yet perhaps they ought not. The works of Swift and Shenstone are a melancholy example of the indiscretion of friends in regard to posthumous publications. The admirers of Mr Gray will be happy to think, that he has made choice of such an able executor as Mr Mason."

On reading what Dr Beattie has said in the preceding letter, on the publication of posthumous works, it is not to be wondered, if I feel a more than ordinary anxiety, lest I may myself have fallen into the error respecting Dr Beattie, which he so justly reprobates with regard to some former publications. All I can say on the head is, that I have endeavoured scrupulously to adhere to the rule with which I set out, "of not admitting any thing that I thought "would hurt the feelings of others; nor any anecdote or opinion "which Dr Beattie himself could have wished to have suppressed."* If I have erred in that respect, however, as to error we are all liable, I trust I may obtain belief when I say, that I have erred unintentionally; and that if any such shall be pointed out to me, I shall be most ready to correct whatever is amiss, should this work ever arrive at a second edition.

* Introduction, p. viii.

LETTER LI.

DR BEATTIE TO DR BLACKLOCK.

Aberdeen, 23d May, 1772.

"I AM greatly obliged to you for your elegy,* which I have read with much pleasure. The plan is new, and the sentiments are proper, and often very pathetic. Where the person lamented has no remarkable peculiarities of character, it is difficult to give a new turn to the elegy; every thing that can be said on these occasions having been said so often already; yet I think in your elegy there is a great deal of novelty and originality. You say it savours strongly of the *tenth lustrum;* a circumstance which could never have prejudiced me against it; for I believe you will find, that the best human compositions have been written, or at least finished, when the author was above forty. Virgil published his "Georgics" at forty-two, if I mistake not; and Milton his "Paradise Lost," when he was more than sixty. In youthful compositions there may be more of that romantic cast of imagination, which young people admire; but very rarely is there so much of those qualities that are universally pleasing, as in the productions of persons further advanced in life; I mean, knowledge of human nature, good sense, mature reflection, and accuracy of plan and language."

LETTER LII.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.†

"I REJOICE to hear that Mr Garrick is so well as to be able to appear in tragedy. It is in vain to indulge one's self in unavailing complaints, otherwise I could rail by the hour at dame

* What elegy is here spoken of, I know not.

† This letter is imperfect, and the date is wanting; but it must have been written about this time.

Fortune, for placing me beyond the reach of that arch-magician, as Horace would have called him. I well remember, and I think can never forget, how he once affected me in Macbeth, and made me almost throw myself over the front seat of the two-shilling gallery. I wish I had another opportunity of risking my neck and nerves in the same cause. To fall by the hands of Garrick and Shakespeare would ennoble my memory to all generations: To be serious, if all actors were like this one, I do not think it would be possible for a person of sensibility to outlive the representation of Hamlet, Lear, or Macbeth: which, by the bye, seems to suggest a reason for that mixture of comedy and tragedy of which our great poet was so fond, and which the Frenchified critics think such an intolerable outrage both against nature and decency. Against nature, it is no outrage at all: the inferior officers of a court know little of what passes among kings and statesmen; and may be very merry, when their superiors are very sad; and if so, the Porter's soliloquy in Macbeth may be a very just imitation of nature. And I can never accuse of indecency the man, who, by the introduction of a little unexpected merriment, saves me from a disordered head, or a broken heart. If Shakespeare knew his own powers, he must have seen the necessity of tempering his tragic rage, by a mixture of comic ridicule; otherwise there was some danger of his running into greater excesses than deer-stealing, by sporting with the lives of all the people of taste in these realms. Other play-wrights must conduct their approaches to the human heart with the utmost circumspection, a single false step may make them lose a great deal of ground; but Shakespeare made his way to it at once, and could make his audience burst their sides this moment, and break their hearts the next.—I have often seen Hamlet performed by the underlings of the theatre, but none of these seemed to understand what they were about. Hamlet's character, though perfectly natural, is so very uncommon, that few, even of our critics, can enter into it. Sorrow, indignation, revenge, and consciousness of his own irresolution, tear his heart; the peculiarity of his circumstances often obliges him to counterfeit madness, and the storm of passions within him often drives him to the verge of real madness. This produces a situation so interesting, and a conduct so complicated, as none but Shakespeare could have had the courage to describe, or even to invent, and none

but Garrick will ever be able to exhibit.—Excuse this rambling: I know you like the subject; and for my part I like it so much, that when I once get in, I am not willing to find my way out of it.

"I have enclosed two papers; one is an epitaph which I wrote (at the Doctor's desire) for Mrs Gregory, and which has one kind of merit, not very common in these compositions, that of being perfectly true:* the other is a tune which you desired me to send you, and which, if it were what is pretended, would indeed be a very great curiosity; but I am apt to think that it has been composed in modern times, and even since the invention of the present musical system. Yet I have been told, by pretty good authority, that the Greeks believe it to be as ancient as the days of Theseus.†

"The book of second-sight has not, I fear, given you much entertainment.‡ The tales are ill-told, and ill-chosen, and the language so barbarous as to be in many places unintelligible, even to a Scotsman. I have heard many better stories of the second-sight, than any this author has given, attested by such persons, and accompanied by such circumstances, as to preclude contradiction, though not suspicion. All our Highlanders believe in this second-sight: but the instances, in which it is said to operate, are generally so ambiguous, and the revelations supposed to be communicated by it so frivolous, that I cannot bring myself to acquiesce in it. Indeed this same historian has made me more incredulous than I was before; for his whole book betrays an excess of folly and weakness. Were its revelations important, I should be less inclined to unbelief; but to suppose the Deity working a miracle, in order to announce a marriage, or the arrival of a poor stranger, or the making of a coffin, would require such evidence as has not yet attended any of these tales, and is indeed what scarce any kind of evidence could make one suppose. These communications are all made to the ignorant, the superstitious, and generally to the young; I never heard of a man of learning, sense, or observation, that was favoured with any of them; a strong presumption against their credibility. I have been told, that the inhabitants of some

* Vide Appendix, [U.] † Vide Appendix, [X.]

‡ Dr Beattie has introduced a disquisition on the second-sight, into his "Essay on Poetry and Music," part I. chap. VI. 3. p. 481. 4to. ed.

parts of the Alps do also lay claim to a sort of second-sight: and I believe the same superstition, or something like it, may be found in many other countries, where the face of nature, and the solitary life of the natives, tend to impress the imagination with melancholy. The Highlands of Scotland are a picturesque, but gloomy region. Long tracts of solitary mountains covered with heath and rocks, and often obscured by mist; narrow valleys, thinly inhabited, and bounded by precipices that resound for ever with the fall of torrents; a soil so rugged, and a climate so dreary, as to admit neither the amusements of pasturage, nor the cheerful toils of agriculture; the mournful dashing of waves along the friths and lakes that every where intersect this country; the portentous sounds, which every change of the wind, and every increase and diminution of the waters, is apt to raise in a region full of rocks and hollow cliffs and caverns; the grotesque and ghastly appearance of such a landscape, especially by the light of the moon;—objects like these diffuse an habitual gloom over the fancy, and give it that romantic cast, that disposes to invention, and that melancholy, which inclines one to the fear of unseen things and unknown events. It is observable too, that the ancient Scottish Highlanders had scarce any other way of supporting themselves, than by hunting, fishing, or war; professions, that are continually exposed to the most fatal accidents. Thus, almost every circumstance in their lot tended to rouse and terrify the imagination. Accordingly their poetry is uniformly mournful; their music melancholy and dreadful, and their superstitions are all of the gloomy kind. The fairies confined their gambols to the Lowlands: the mountains were haunted with giants, and angry ghosts, and funeral processions, and other prodigies of direful import. That a people, beset with such real and imaginary bugbears, should fancy themselves dreaming, even when awake, of corpses, and graves, and coffins, and other terrible things, seems natural enough; but that their visions ever tended to any real or useful discovery, I am much inclined to doubt. Not that I mean to deny the existence of ghosts, or to call in question the accounts of extraordinary revelations, granted to individuals, with which both history and tradition abound. But in all cases, where such accounts are entitled to credit, or supported by tolerable evidence, it will be found, that they referred to something which it concerned men to know; the overthrow of kingdoms, the death of

great persons, the detection of atrocious crimes, or the preservation of important lives.—But I take up too much of your time with these matters.

"I have lately received another very kind letter from Mr Mason, in which he gives me an account of all the poetical pieces, which Mr Gray has left unpublished. There is, 1. A Sonnet on the death of a friend, written 1742, of true Petrarchian pathos and delicacy. 2. Stanzas in alternate rhyme, to Mr Bently, on the designs he made for his poems. 3. An Epitaph on Sir William Williams, who was killed at the siege of Belle-Isle; perfect in its kind. 4. The opening scene of a tragedy, called Agrippina, with the first speech of the second; written much in Racine's manner, and with many masterly strokes. 5. An unfinished address to ignorance, in rhyme of ten syllables; satirical. 6. One hundred and seven lines, of the same measure with the former, of the beginning of an ethical essay on education and government; finished, as far as it goes, in the highest manner; the most valuable piece he has left. 7. Six eight-lined stanzas of an ode on the vicissitude of the seasons, nearly equal in point of merit, allowing for its being incomplete, with the ode on spring; besides some translations, epigrams, and Latin poems. Mr Mason obligingly offers me such of these pieces as I wish to see, and I have asked to see the 1. 3. 6. and 7. I heartily wish they may be printed, as they would tend to shew the universality of Gray's genius."

LETTER LIII.

DR PERCY* (NOW LORD BISHOP OF DROMORE) TO DR BEATTIE.

Northumberland House, 27th May, 1772.

"I LOSE no time in thanking you for your most obliging letter, and the very pleasing ballad that accompanied it. Such presents, when they fall in your way, will always be most acceptable, and very gratefully acknowledged.

* The editor of "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry," to which the first part of this letter alludes.

"I had also another reason for troubling you with so early an answer: it was to convey to you a copy of the inclosed sermons; wherein you will find very warm, but just acknowledgments for the services you have done to the cause of truth. The author* of them is so much your admirer, that when he knew I was writing to you, he desired me to inclose a few lines from himself. If his personal character is not known to you, I must inform you, that Dr Porteus is one of the brightest ornaments of the Church of England: He was chaplain to Archbishop Secker, who left him one of the executors to his will, and editor of his works, which he has since published. He is a man of the most engaging and amiable manners, and most distinguished abilities. The sermons here sent were preached before the king, and procured the preacher a degree of reputation beyond that of any sermons preached in my remembrance. The King and whole court talked of nothing else, for

* The Right Reverend Dr Beilby Porteus, at that time Rector of Lambeth, afterwards Bishop of Chester, and now Lord Bishop of London. This exemplary prelate is too well known, to require any encomium in this place; and the character given of him in this letter, by the Bishop of Dromore, will be allowed by all to be strictly just. Besides what is said here of the Bishop of London's merit as a preacher, it is fully proved by his volumes of printed sermons, which have justly received the best marks of public approbation. One circumstance respecting his discourses from the pulpit deserves, in a particular manner, to be recorded. In the year 1798, and the three following years, when the nation was carrying on the deadliest and the most important war, in which it ever was engaged; while, at the same time too many in the upper ranks of society in London seemed to plunge deeper into every excess of dissipation, as the awful prospect of national affairs became more gloomy and interesting, the Bishop of London conceived the idea of delivering lectures, every Friday, in St James's Church, during the season of Lent. He chose for his subject the Gospel of St Matthew. Those lectures, which have since been published, and are most excellent and instructive, were attended, with great devotion, by crowded audiences of the most fashionable persons of high life: and it is piously to be hoped, not without their suitable improvement.

Dr Beattie had the happiness of becoming personally known to Dr Porteus, on his going to London in the year 1773, and from that period a friendship the most sincere took place between them, and a correspondence, which lasted until Dr Beattie's health no longer permitted him to carry it on.

I cannot but avail myself, with peculiar satisfaction, of this opportunity of expressing the grateful sense I shall ever entertain, of the notice with which the Bishop of London has long honoured me, and which, I am conscious, I owe to our common friend.

many days after; the Queen personally desired to peruse them afterwards in her closet; and the Duke of Northumberland being not at court till the Thursday after the last of them was preached, came home full of the accounts he heard from every mouth, of the impressions these sermons had made in the Chapel Royal. All this you will perhaps think very extraordinary; it is nevertheless literally true, as I can testify of my own personal knowledge."

LETTER LIV.

DR PORTEUS (NOW LORD BISHOP OF LONDON) TO DR BEATTIE.

Lambeth, 22d May, 1772.

"THOUGH I have not the pleasure of being personally known to you, I take the liberty of requesting your acceptance of a small performance of mine, which Dr Percy promises to convey to you. I have read, sir, with singular delight, both your poem called the "Minstrel," and your "Essay on Truth." It is a very uncommon thing to see so much true poetical invention, and such a talent for profound philosophical disquisition, united in the same person, and it is still more uncommon to see such fine parts, especially in a layman, dedicated to the support of virtue and religion. I am not at all surprised to hear, that your spirited attack on the head-quarters of scepticism has drawn upon you the resentment of Mr Hume and his followers. It is nothing more than might be expected, and, in the eyes of all impartial men, it is so far from being any reproach, that it is an honour to you. It shows that they feel the force of your arguments; for personal invective they cannot justly complain of. The keenness of your manly reproofs is directed not against their persons, but their cause; and it falls far short of what such a cause deserves. But whatever unjust aspersions may be thrown upon you by your own countrymen, let this be your consolation, (if you need any) that in England your book has been received with universal applause. In the range of my acquaintance, which is pretty extensive, both among the clergy

and the laity, I have never yet met with a single person, of true taste and sound judgment, who did not speak of your "Essay" in the warmest terms of approbation. In this they have always had my most hearty concurrence, and I was glad of an opportunity of giving some public testimony of my great esteem for your writings; as you will see I have done in a note, which very honestly expresses my real sentiments, and says nothing more than is justly your due.

"The two sermons, which I send you, are meant as the best return I could make (though, I must confess, a very inadequate one) for the great pleasure and instruction I have received from your writings. Give me leave only to add farther, that this place (which is contiguous to London) is my constant residence, from the end of November to the beginning of June. And if either business or amusement should bring you to the metropolis, during that part of the year, I shall be extremely glad to pay my respects to you here, and to assure you how much I am, sir, yours," &c.

LETTER LV.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Edinburgh, 6th July, 1772.

"YOUR last letter, of the 5th June, reached me after I had been some days at Peterhead, endeavouring, by the use of the medicinal waters of that place, to shake off this hideous indisposition. But from that water I did not receive half so much benefit, as from the very agreeable accounts you gave me of your health and spirits. I congratulate you, madam, and myself on your recovery, and I earnestly pray it may be permanent.

"Your description of Tunbridge-wells is so very lively, that I think myself present in every part of it. I see your hills, your cattle, your carriages, your *beaux* and *belles* blended together in agreeable confusion. I am delighted while I sympathise with the feelings of those, whose imagination is refreshed and amused, by the pleasing incongruities of the scene, and whose health and spirits

are restored by the freshness of the air, and the virtues of the fountain. But what interests and delights me most of all, and more than words can express, is, that by the eye of fancy I behold you, madam, looking around on this scene with an aspect, in which all your native benignity, sprightliness, and harmony of soul are heightened, with every decoration that health and cheerfulness can bestow.

"I am greatly affected with your goodness, and Lord Lyttelton's, in urging my advancement with so much zeal and perseverance. After what Lord Mansfield* has done me the honour to

* William Murray, son of the Lord Viscount Stormont, created Baron (afterwards Earl of) Mansfield, and Lord Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench, during the long period of thirty-two years. In early life, he was eminently distinguished by his eloquence at the bar, as well as afterwards in both houses of parliament. When exalted to the bench, he rendered his name revered, not only by the ability and uprightness of his conduct, but by the extent of his knowledge, and the comprehensiveness of his views, upon many new subjects of judicial decision. Scarcely any man of his time possessed, in an equal degree, that wonderful sagacity in detecting chicanery and artifice, in separating fallacy from truth, and sophistry from argument, which discovers, as if by intuition, the exact equity of the case. Nor was he less remarkable for his regularity, punctuality, and dispatch of business, by which the suitors in his court were relieved from the tedious anxiety of suspense, so generally complained of in a court of justice. I am informed, says Sir James Burrows, who was Clerk of the Crown in the Court of King's Bench, and who therefore knew Lord Mansfield well, that at the sittings for London and Middlesex, there are not so few as eight hundred cases set down in a year, and all disposed of. Upon the last day of the last term, says Sir James, if we exclude such motions of the term, as by desire of the parties went over of course, there was not a single matter of any kind that remained undetermined, excepting one case, professedly postponed on account of the situation of America; and the same may be said of the last day of any former term for some years backwards. The same writer also informs us of the following most remarkable circumstance, respecting Lord Mansfield's decisions; that, excepting in two cases, there had not been a final difference of opinion in the court, in any case, or upon any point whatsoever, during the long period from November 1756, to May 1776, the time of Sir James's publication; and it is not less remarkable, that, except in these two cases, no judgment given in that court during the same period has been reversed, either in the Exchequer-Chamber or in Parliament. Lord Mansfield honoured Dr Beattie, in a most particular manner, with his friendly regard. He died, 18th March, 1793, aged 88.

declare in my favour, I cannot doubt but your friendly endeavours will at last prove successful. I now see that Lord Mansfield wishes to establish me in Scotland, and I am certain, that in this, as in other matters, his judgment is founded on the best reasons. I am greatly flattered by your kind invitation to Sandleford. I would not, for any consideration, forego the hope that I shall one time or other avail myself of it. But at present, this is not in my power.

"The second canto of the "Minstrel" is nearly finished, and has been so these two years; but till my health be better established, I must not think of making any additions to it.

"If you have not seen Dr Porteus's two sermons, lately published, I would recommend them to your notice, because they are, in my opinion, among the most elegant compositions of the kind in the English language. Dr P. did me the honour to send me a copy of them, accompanied with a very kind, and very polite letter."

LETTER LVI.

DR BEATTIE TO DR PORTEUS, (NOW LORD BISHOP OF LONDON).

Aberdeen, 18th August, 1772.

"YOUR approbation of my weak endeavours in the cause of truth gives me the most sincere pleasure. How shall I thank you, sir, for having declared that approbation, so flattering to my ambition, and so favourable to my reputation and interest? Not satisfied with giving the public a favourable opinion of my late publication, and honouring my name with a place in your work, you wish to recommend me to the notice of Royalty itself, and to give to my labours such a lustre as might attract those eyes, from which many would desire to hide all merit but their own. Be assured, sir, that I shall ever retain a just sense of your candour, good nature, and generosity; and that the encouragement I have received from you, and from your noble-minded countrymen, will serve as an additional motive to employ that health and leisure,

which Providence may hereafter allot me, in promoting, to the utmost of my poor abilities, the cause of truth, virtue, and mankind. This is the best return I can make to your goodness; for thus only can I, in any degree, approve myself worthy of it.

"The "Essay on Truth," according to my original plan, is only the first part of a large treatise that I had projected, on the evidences of morality and religion. I entered on my second part some years ago, and made a little progress in it. My intention there was to attempt a confutation of the errors which Hume, Helvetius, and other fashionable writers had introduced into the moral sciences. The subject would have led me to the evidence of Christianity; and my own heart would have disposed, and my own conscience determined me to do justice to the characters and abilities of Voltaire, and other contemporary infidels, with the same freedom, and with the same spirit, that appear in what I have written against Hume's philosophy. But the wretched state of my health obliges me to suspend, for the present, all my literary projects. I hope, however, to get better in time, for I am told, that these nervous disorders are seldom fatal at my age.

"I can never forget what I owe to the candour and humanity of the English nation. To have obtained the approbation and patronage of those who have so long been, and who will, I hope, continue to the latest ages to be, the patrons of truth, and the great assertors of the rights of mankind, is an honour indeed, of which I feel the high value. While animated by this consideration, I can overlook, and almost forget, the opposition I have met with from a powerful party in this country, who, since the publication of the "Essay on Truth," have taken no little pains to render my condition as uneasy as possible. In other countries, infidels appear but as individuals; but in Scotland they form a party, whose principle is, to discountenance and bear down religion to the utmost of their power.*

"I am much obliged to you for speaking so favourably of the "Minstrel." When I published the first book, the greatest part of the second was written; and I hoped to have got the whole ready (for I intend only three books) within a year. But since that time, my health has been quite unfit for study of every kind.

* See what is said at p. 72.

When I go to London, which may possibly be next summer, I will, with great pleasure, avail myself of your kind invitation, and take the first opportunity of paying my respects to you at Lambeth."

LETTER LVII.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 30th September, 1772.

"I HAVE never seen Mr Jones's imitations of the Asiatic poetry. From what you say of them, I am sure they will entertain me; though I am entirely of your opinion, that, if they had been translations, they would have been much more valuable, and the more literal the better. Such things deserve attention, not so much for the amusement they yield to the fancy, as for the knowledge they convey of the minds and manners of the people among whom they are produced. To those who have feelings, and are capable of observation, that poetical expression and description will be most agreeable, which corresponds most exactly to their own experience. I cannot sympathize with passions I never felt; and when objects are described in colours, shapes, and proportions quite unlike to what I have been accustomed to, I suspect that the descriptions are not just, and that it is not *nature* that is presented to my view, but the dreams of a man who had never studied nature.

"What is the reason, madam, that the poetry, and indeed the whole phraseology, of the eastern nations (and I believe the same thing holds of all uncultivated nations) is so full of glaring images, exaggerated metaphors, and gigantic descriptions? Is it, because that, in those countries, where art has made little progress, nature shoots forth into wilder magnificence, and every thing appears to be constructed on a larger scale? Is it that the language, through defect of copiousness, is obliged to adopt metaphor and similitude, even for expressing the most obvious sentiments? Is it, that the ignorance and indolence of such people, unfriendly to liberty, dis-

poses them to regard their governors as of supernatural dignity, and to decorate them with the most pompous and high-sounding titles, the frequent use of which comes at last to infect their whole conversation with bombast? Or is it, that the passions of those people are really stronger, and their climate more luxuriant? Perhaps all these causes may conspire in producing this effect. Certain it is, that Europe is much indebted, for her style and manner of composition, to her ancient authors, particularly to those of Greece, by whose example and authority that simple and natural diction was happily established, which all our best authors of succeeding times have been ambitious to imitate; but whence those ancient Greek authors derived it, whether from imitating other authors, still more ancient; or from the operation of physical causes, or from the nature of their language, particularly its unrivalled copiousness and flexibility; or from some unaccountable and peculiar delicacy in their taste; or from the force of their genius, that, conscious of its own vigour, despised all adventitious support, and all foreign ornament—it is not perhaps easy to determine.

"The fourth edition of my essay is now in the press."

LETTER LVIII.

SIR ADOLPHUS OUGHTON* TO DR BEATTIE.

London, 3d November, 1772.

"THOUGH your short stay at Edinburgh put it out of my power to cultivate that acquaintance with you which I wished, yet, as a lover of truth, I cannot but be warmly interested in the honour

* Lieutenant General Sir James Adolphus Oughton, K. B. was the son of Sir Adolphus Oughton, a general officer in the British army. He received his classical education on the foundation at the Charter-house school, whence he was removed to Trinity College, Dublin. When he had finished his studies, he entered into the army, and served in Flanders, under the Duke of Cumberland, whom he accompanied to Scotland, in the memorable year 1746. In the seven years war, he served in Germany, under Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick; and during these two wars was present at most of the battles

and welfare of its ablest champion. You will, therefore, not be surprised, that I should take a real pleasure in communicating to you a circumstance, which has a tendency to the promoting of both. I was yesterday informed, from the very best authority, that our excellent Sovereign had read your "Essay" with the utmost attention and approbation, and expressed his intention of bestowing on you some mark of his royal favour, when a proper opportunity shall offer. Proverbial sayings, as resulting from the experience

that were fought by these two generals. In particular, at the battle of Minden, in the year 1759, he commanded, as lieutenant colonel, one of the six British regiments, which so greatly distinguished themselves by their gallantry on that celebrated day. In the interval between the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, and the seven years war, Sir Adolphus's regiment being stationed in Minorca, he had obtained leave of absence to make the tour of Italy; in all the principal parts of which he spent some time, sufficient to cultivate and improve his taste for the fine arts, in the knowledge of which he greatly excelled. On that occasion, too, he formed an acquaintance with some British travellers of high rank, who continued ever after to honour him with their distinguished notice. His talent for the acquisition of languages was extraordinary; so that he not only knew those of Greece and Rome, as well as of France and Italy, but he possessed some knowledge of oriental literature, and was fond of the study of antiquities. Even at an advanced period of life, after he settled here as commander in chief of his majesty's forces, he applied himself to the study of the Gaelic, or ancient dialect of the Highlands of Scotland: in which he made all the proficiency that could be attained, chiefly by the help of books.

To all these acquirements in knowledge, Sir Adolphus Oughton added the most estimable virtues of a true Christian, and united, in no common degree, the character of the man of piety with that of the man of the world. Obliged, by his official situation, to live almost always in the midst of company, to which he had no dislike, Sir Adolphus displayed much hospitality at his social board, yet always within the rules of the strictest temperance. He was extremely polite in his deportment, and from his great stock of acquired knowledge, his conversation was uncommonly instructive and entertaining. In his attention to all the external observances of religion, he was most exact; and I know not that I have ever felt more forcibly the power of devotion, than when on a Sunday evening at his house, in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, collecting his guests around him, I have heard him read the church-service, from the English Liturgy, with the utmost fervour, and most graceful elocution. I was, during many years, honoured, in a particular manner, with the friendship of Sir Adolphus Oughton, and I shall ever look back, with grateful satisfaction, and I hope not without advantage, on the many happy and instructive hours I have passed in his company. Sir Adolphus Oughton died at Bath, 14th April, 1780, in his 66th year.

of mankind, and appealing to their common sense, have generally been received as axioms; most sorry I am, that *Regis ad exemplum* can no longer lay claim to it in our country. It is equally to be lamented, that, from the nature of our constitution, and the violence of our parties, the King's power, even of doing good, should in many instances be limited, in most obstructed. Your labours, sir, for the true interests of mankind, are free and uncontrolled; pursue then the glorious task; open the eyes and amend the hearts of a deluded and dissipated people. Your generous efforts must necessarily be productive of much good; and you cannot fail of your reward, because it depends on yourself."

LETTER LIX.

THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF YORK* TO DR BEATTIE.

Brodsworth, September 19th, 1772.

"AS my brother, Lord Kinnoull, has lately communicated to me your letter to him of August 10th, explaining your views, which certainly have not as yet been answered with success correspondent to your talents, I desired him to communicate to you my thoughts, which, at least, are the thoughts of a real friend and well-wisher, who has the highest esteem of your merit in the cause of truth.

"I doubt whether you would be well suited with a lay-place, or a pension, or a residence in Scotland. As far as I can judge, the ministry in the church of England would be the profession the most agreeable to your qualifications and inclination: but the prospect of fair profit in it ought to be considered; for *that* is a duty to yourself, and to your family. Give me leave, too, to say, that there is a *prior* duty, that is, to your conscience.

"Though I was educated in the church of England, yet I have often sifted my mind with sincere and impartial reflection, and

* The Honourable and Most Reverend Dr Robert Hay Drummond, brother to the Earl of Kinnoull.

with as enlarged views as I could take in, of the great dispensations of the Deity, centering in Christ. Upon the whole, I have always thought, that the church of England is the most agreeable to Christain doctrine and discipline; equally distant from wild conceit and implict faith; free, manly, and benevolent; conducive to the cause of truth and virtue, to the happiness of society, and of every individual in it. And it is the establishment that seems to carry the fairest aspect with it, towards promoting pure Christianity, and civil order; without over-bearing, or artful or abject means. With due Christain condescension to different opinions and modes, this is the result of frequent consideration and conviction, and is the testimony of my conscience. If it were otherwise, I would not, I could not, in honour, retain even the great emoluments with which I am favoured, for another moment.

"It is surely unreasonable and unnecessary to trouble you with my notions. I allow it: but this is only a mode of flattering myself with the hopes, that yours are similar. If such is your opinion of the church of England, and if it is your upright intention to exercise in its ministry your most valuable abilities and knowledge for the service of true religion, I shall think your entry into it a happy acquisition. And I would endeavour to contribute, as far as my scanty patronage goes, or my friendship and influence can extend, that you should enter into it with credit, and live in it with comfort.

"Lord Kinnoull has written to Lord Mansfield, and I shall talk with him after Christmas. I shall not leave my Diocese till that time. I have written also to-day to our friend Mrs. Montagu."

LETTER LX.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 6th November, 1772.

"I AM happy to find, that the plan I have just now in view is honoured with your approbation. It is the result of the most mature deliberation; and I hope I shall never have occasion to repent

it. Whether my present views shall prove successful, is a point very uncertain. I shall endeavour, by moderating my hopes and my wishes, to prepare myself for the worst.

"You do too much honour to the letter I wrote to the archbishop of York. It contained nothing that could entertain you. Some time or other I shall give you, at large, my opinion of the matters contained in it; for of the letter itself I kept no copy. It has pleased his Grace, and given great satisfaction to Lord Kinnoull.

"Dr Gregory will shew you the character of Rousseau, as it is now finished. Some years ago, I should have put more panegyric in it, and less censure; but since that time, I have had leisure to examine some of his theological, and some too of his philosophical tenets, which has lowered considerably my opinion of his candour and understanding: but my admiration of his talents, as an eloquent and pathetic writer, still remains unimpaired; and I am confident he had originally that in him, which might have made him one of the greatest philosophers in the world, if his genius had not been perverted by the fashion of the times, and by the love of paradox. The passage I allude to, where he speaks so well of the genius of Christianity, and the character of its Divine Founder, is in the creed of the Savoyard curate, where he draws a comparison between Jesus Christ and Socrates."

LETTER LXI.

MRS MONTAGU TO DR BEATTIE.

London, 13th December, 1772.

"YOU ask me why the eastern nations are, in their poetical compositions, so full of glaring images, and exaggerated metaphors? One reason, I presume, is, that they are little addicted to write or read prose. Fiction and bombast are called *le Phœbus*, in the French language: the marvellous is affected in poetry more than in prose; exaggeration is a road to the marvellous. The first

passage from hieroglyphic representation to imitation by words, must naturally be by images. The Greeks, by a certain subtilty of parts, and the popular character of the philosophers, addicted themselves greatly to metaphysics; this banished from the learned the grosser images. They cultivated all the parts of rhetoric; thence grew precision, and consequently the figurative style became less in use; words acquired certain and exact signification; and Socrates, the best and most modest of men, would inculcate the maxim, that the gods hate impudence, without delineating an eagle, a crocodile, a sea-horse, and a fish, as the Egyptian sages had done, to teach it. Many of the high pompous and high sounding titles you take notice of, as given to eastern princes, are verbal translations of the symbols of regal power, executive justice, &c. As to Homer, we know little about him; he seems to paint exactly from the life, as our Shakespeare did, and as the first-rate geniuses will always do, where there are not established laws of criticism, to which they must bend, and which set up a pattern and mode to work by. You will find Æschylus an hieroglyphical, symbolical, allegorical writer; his works smell of Egypt, and the mythology of his country. Sophocles saw that the historical muse of Herodotus was admired, he therefore takes a more middle flight between history and poetry. Euripides finds his countrymen still more refined, and is a moral philosopher, as well as poet. He writes to Socrates, and the disciples of Socrates. Something of the pomp and luxury of an Asiatic poet's descriptions certainly arises from the wealth and plenty of his country, and the display of gold and jewels, and the perfumes, &c. in the palaces of the great. Ossian exaggerates only the strength and valour of his heroes, and the beauty of his women. As poetry professes to please and surprise, it will always embellish and magnify. We owe much to the metaphysical turn of the Greeks, for refining our ideas, and spiritualizing them. While only fables and panegyrics were fabricated by the poets, clear, and adequate, and well-proportioned phrase could never be established. Obscurity was necessary, exaggeration would be sought, and though Homer, who sung to the distant posterity of Agamemnon, &c. was not under a necessity of magnifying his character beyond the ordinary proportion of human qualities, I dare say Agamemnon's family-bard, and the rest of the heroes' poets, attributed many extravagant exploits to them. As to the

passions, I believe them to be much more violent in warm countries; and as the Asiatic life is more indolent, the body employed in less motion, and the mind less diverted by variety of objects, it desires what it likes with more vehement and uninterrupted attention. These are my random thoughts upon your questions; but as they are merely my own, I have no great confidence in them."

LETTER LXII.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 12th January, 1773.

"IT gave me the most sincere pleasure to find, that the Archbishop of York was satisfied with the sentiments expressed in the letter I had the honour to write to him. His Grace sent my letter to Lord Kinnoull, who was pleased to write to me on the occasion, and to express his approbation in very strong terms. Considering the turn that my affairs were likely to take, I wished for an opportunity of doing myself justice, by explaining my opinion of the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England; and a more favourable opportunity could not have been wished for, than that which his Grace was pleased to grant me. I am much honoured by your application in my behalf, to the Dutchess of Portland, and deeply sensible of the importance of her Grace's interest and favourable opinion.

"In the new edition of my "Essay" I have inserted a long note, containing a character of Rousseau and his writings. This I did, by the advice of Dr Gregory, who told me, that many persons, who wished me well, had signified to him their desire of knowing my reasons for thinking so favourably of that philosopher, as to place his name in the same list with Bacon, Shakespeare, and Montesquieu. I was somewhat afraid, lest, by bestowing on Rousseau those praises which I think are his due, I might offend some well-meaning people, who had read only those parts of his works that express his dissatisfaction with some parts of the christian

doctrine: and therefore when I sent my criticism to Dr Gregory, I desired him to consider it very seriously, and, if he thought it would give offence to any christian, or tend to embroil me in controversy, to suppress it altogether. But instead of suppressing, he forwarded it to the printer, and afterwards wrote to me that he entirely approved of it. I long to know your opinion of this note; and have therefore desired Mr Dilly to send you the book; you will find it at the 437th page. There is at page 330, a ludicrous note, intended to expose some of Voltaire's reasonings on the subject of necessity. These are the only additions of any consequence that are made to this new impression.

"Mr Dilly will also send you a copy of this book, addressed to Mrs Carter, which I must beg, madam, you will take the trouble to forward to her, with some apology, to make it acceptable. It is a tribute of respect and gratitude which I owe to her extraordinary genius and virtue, and to the pleasure and instruction I have received from her writings.

"I am greatly delighted with your account of the causes, that produced the striking diversity, which appears in the poetical style of Greece and of modern Europe, compared with the style commonly called oriental. You have, in my opinion, fully accounted for this diversity. It is great pity we know so little of Homer's history, and of the state of Grecian literature before his time. It appears to me, that the records of Greece have never gone far beyond the Trojan war; for it is observable, that most of Homer's heroes are descended from Jupiter, in the third or fourth degree only; in other words, that they could not trace their genealogy higher than the third or fourth generation: which is a proof, or at least a presumption, that they wanted letters, and had but lately emerged from barbarity. Horace makes the contemporaries of Orpheus and Amphion to have been perfect savages, till humanized by the charms of poetry and music: but perhaps he spoke only from conjectures, gathered out of the fables of those ancient times. If those conjectures be just; if the Greeks were really in a state of barbarity and ignorance, so late as the third or fourth generation before the Trojan war; it is a matter of astonishment, that, in Homer's time, (about 150 years after that war) their language should be so copious, so regular, so harmonious, so subtle, in the discrimination of thought, and so wonderfully diversified in its in-

flexions. If we did not know the thing to be impossible, we should be tempted to think that the Greek language must have been the invention of philosophers: if it arose, like other languages, from vulgar and accidental use, and yet came, in so short time, to such perfection, we cannot help thinking, that the Greeks had received from nature, superior force of genius, and delicacy of taste; and that Horace spoke as a philosopher, as well as a poet, when he said *Graiis ingenium, Graiis dedit ore rotundo musa loqui.*"

The following letter was written in reply to one from me, in which I informed Dr Beattie of the death of our common friend, Dr Gregory. It is expressive of the tenderest grief, at the same time full of the most pious sentiments of resignation to Divine Providence on the occasion, which, under all the calamities that befel him through life, was his chief support, and surest consolation.

LETTER LXIII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 13th February, 1773.

"I AM deeply sensible of your goodness, in communicating to me, in so tender and soothing a manner, the news of a misfortune, which is indeed one of the severest I have ever felt. For these two months past my spirits have been unusually depressed, so that I am but ill prepared for so terrible a stroke. Of the loss which society, and which his family have received; of the incomparable loss which I sustain, by the death of this excellent person, I can say nothing; my heart is too full, and I have not yet recovered myself so far, as to think or speak coherently, on this, or any other subject.

"You justly observe, that his friends may derive no small consolation, from the circumstance of his death having been with-

out pain,* and from the well-grounded hope we may entertain, of his having made a happy change. But I find I cannot proceed; I thought I should have been able to give you some of my thoughts on this occasion; but the subject overpowers me. Write to me as soon, and as fully as you can, of the situation of his family, and whatever you may think I would wish to know. I shall endeavour to follow your kind advice, and to reconcile myself to this great affliction, as much as I am able. My reason, I trust, is fully reconciled: I am thoroughly convinced that every dispensation of Providence is wise and good; and that by making a proper improvement of the evils of this life, we may convert them all into blessings. It becomes us therefore to adore the Supreme Benefactor, when he takes away, as well as when he gives; for He is wise and beneficent in both."

LETTER LXIV.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 3d May, 1773.

"I HAVE just now finished the business of a melancholy winter. When I wrote to you last, which was in January, my health and spirits were in a very low state. In this condition, the unexpected death of the best of men, and of friends, came upon me with a weight, which at any time I should have thought almost unsupportable, but which, at that time, was afflicting to a degree which human abilities alone could never have endured. But Providence, ever beneficent and gracious, has supported me under this heavy dispensation; and I hope, I shall in time be enabled to review it, even with that cheerful submission, which becomes a christian, and which none but a christian can entertain. I have a thousand things to say on this most affecting subject; but for your sake, madam, and for my own, I shall not, at present, enter upon them. Nobody can be more sensible than you are, of the irreparable loss, which not only his own family and friends, but which so-

* He was found dead in bed, probably from an attack of the gout, to which he was subject.

ciety in general, sustains by the loss of this excellent person: and I need not tell you, for of this too I know you are sensible, that of all his friends, (his own family excepted) none has so much cause of sorrow, on this occasion, as I. I should never have done, if I were to enter into the particulars of his kindness to me. For these many years past, I have had the happiness to be of his intimate acquaintance. He took part in all my concerns; and, as I concealed nothing from him, he knew my heart and my character as well as I myself did; only the partiality of his friendship made him think more favourably of me than I deserved. In all my difficulties, I applied to him for advice and comfort, both which he had the art of communicating in such a way as never failed to compose and strengthen my mind. His zeal in promoting my interest and reputation is very generally known. In a word, (for I must endeavour to quit a subject, which will long be oppressive to my heart) my inward quiet, and external prosperity, were objects of his particular and unwearied care; and he never missed any opportunity of promoting both, to the utmost of his power. I wrote to his son soon after the fatal event; and have had the comfort to hear from several hands, that he, and his sisters, and the whole family, behave with a propriety that charms every body. In continuing his father's lectures, he acquits himself to universal satisfaction."

LETTER LXV.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 21st April, 1773.

"A BOOK has been lately published, which makes no little noise in this country. It is an Essay on the Origin and Progress of Language; the author is Mr Burnet of Monboddo,* one of our Lords of the Session, a man of great learning, but rather too much devoted to Greek literature, particularly the Peripatetic philosophy. In the first part of his work, he gives a very learned, elaborate, and abstruse account of the origin of ideas, according to the metaphy-

* See p. 17.

sic of Plato, and the commentators upon Aristotle. He then treats of the origin of human society, and of language, (which he considers as a human invention) in the way in which many of our fashionable philosophers have treated of them of late; representing men as having originally been, and continued for many ages to be, no better than beasts, and indeed in many respects worse; destitute of speech, of reason, of conscience, of social affection, and of every thing that can confer dignity upon a creature, and possessed of nothing but external sense and memory, and a capacity of improvement. The system is not a new one: it is borrowed (whatever these philosophers may pretend) from Epicurus, or rather from Lucretius, of whose account of it, Horace gives a pretty exact abridgment, in these lines: "Cum prorepserunt primis anamalia "terris, mutum et turpe pecus, &c." which Lord Monboddo takes for his motto, and which, he says, comprehend in miniature the whole history of man. In regard to facts that make for his system (all which our author sees with microscopical eyes) he is amazingly credulous, and equally blind and sceptical, in regard to every fact of an opposite tendency. He professes a regard for the scripture, and I believe means it no harm; but his system cannot possibly be reconciled to it. In a word, he has gone further in brutifying human nature, than any author, ancient or modern. Yet there are many curious and good things in his book. I have been entertained, and sometimes instructed by it; but notwithstanding this, and in spite of my regard for the author, who is truly a worthy man, and to whom I am under particular obligations, I take it up as a task, and can never read above half an hour in it at a time; so odious, so filthy, is the picture he gives of the nature of man. It pains and shocks me, as if I were witnessing the dissection of a putrid carcass. It is, however, a book, which I believe will do little hurt; for the vulgar it is too abstruse, and too learned: and the greater part of his readers will be moved rather to laughter than to conviction, when they hear him assert, which he does with the utmost confidence and gravity, that the Ourang-Outangs are of our species; that in the bay of Bengal exists a nation of human creatures with tails, discovered 130 years ago, by a Swedish Skipper; that the beavers and sea-cats are social and political animals, though man by nature is neither social nor political; nor even rational; reason, reflection, a sense of right and wrong, society, policy, and

even thought, being, in the human species, according to this author, as much the effects of art, contrivance, and long experience, as writing, ship-building, or any other manufacture.

"Some years ago, I wrote a small treatise in Latin, on a subject similar to this of Lord Monboddo's, but the conclusions I drew were widely different. From the nature of language, I proved, to my own satisfaction at least, that if men had ever been a *mutum et turpe pecus*, they must, without supernatural assistance, have continued so to this day; that therefore man, in all ages from the beginning, must have been a speaking animal; that the first man must have received the divine gift of language from God himself, by inspiration; and that the children of our first parents, and their descendants to the present time, must have learned to speak by imitation and instruction. And for the smaller diversities in kindred languages, (such as those which took place in the French language, for instance, compared with the Italian and Spanish) I would account from the revolutions of human affairs, and the tendency of language to alteration; and for the greater diversities, (such as those that appear in the European languages, compared with those of China, America, &c.) I would account from the confusion of Babel; nor do I think it possible to account for them satisfactorily in any other way."

In several of Dr Beattie's letters at this time, he had mentioned his intention of undertaking a journey to England; the cause he chiefly assigned was the broken state of his constitution, which he hoped, on the authority of his friend and physician, the late Dr Gregory, would be improved by the exercise of travelling.

In pursuance of his intention, Dr Beattie set out from Aberdeen, in the end of April, for London, accompanied by Mrs Beattie. And after paying a visit of two days to the Earl of Kinnoull,* at Dupplin-Castle, in Perthshire, he arrived in Edinburgh.

Dr Beattie now communicated to me all the motives of his journey to London, which, besides the recovery of his health, and the paying a visit to his friends there, had a still farther object in

* The elder brother of the Honourable and Most Reverend Robert Hay Drummond, at that time Lord Archbishop of York.

view. So early as his former visit to London, in the year 1771, his English friends had formed an anxious wish, that some attempt should be made to procure for him a permanent provision or establishment. His fame, indeed, as an exquisite poet, and an eloquent as well as energetic philosophical writer, was considerable. He had been honoured, also, with the friendship of some of the most distinguished characters, both for rank in life, as well as reputation in the republic of letters. But except the very trifling sums, which he had received from the booksellers, for his "Essay on Truth," and his "Minstrel," so trifling as scarcely to be worth mentioning, he remained with no other property or provision for the support of his family, than the very moderate emoluments arising from his professorship of moral philosophy, in the university of Aberdeen. His friends had likewise reason to believe, that neither Dr Beattie's name, nor his merits as a distinguished writer in the cause of truth, were altogether unknown to the King, whose love of literature, and marked attention to every thing that could promote the best interests of religion and virtue, it was hoped, might procure for Dr Beattie some substantial proof of his majesty's regard. And, in fact, the King had been pleased not only to express his approbation of the works which Dr Beattie had published, but had even signified his intention of conferring on the author some mark of his royal favour.

In consequence of these flattering symptoms of success, in a pursuit so interesting to himself and his family, his friends in England had urged his coming to London without delay, and bringing with him such letters of introduction to those in power, as were most likely to be of use.

By Lord Kinnoull he had been made known to his brother, the Archbishop of York, and to Lord Mansfield, who were both of them much disposed to serve him. And from Sir Adolphus Oughton, Dr Beattie received, as he passed through Edinburgh, a letter of introduction to the Earl of Dartmouth, at that time secretary of state for the colonies, with whom Sir Adolphus was intimately acquainted, and who afterwards much contributed to Dr Beattie's success.

On his arrival in London, in the beginning of May 1773, he hastened to wait on those friends to whom he had become known during his former residence there, and by whom he was again re-

ceived with much cordiality. Mrs Montagu, in particular, entered eagerly into his interests, and pointed out to him, what, in her opinion, was the most proper mode of proceeding, in order to have his case brought under his Majesty's immediate notice. Among others, he failed not to pay an early visit to Lord Dartmouth, in order to deliver the letter he had brought from Sir Adolphus Oughton. He experienced the most friendly reception from that nobleman, who paid him many compliments, extolled the candour with which his book was written, and said, that no book, published in his time, had been more generally read, or more approved of. Lord Dartmouth told him of the King's good-will towards him, and that Lord North * was his friend. He said he would mention his business to Lord North, and that perhaps an opportunity might offer, of letting the King know that he was in London. He promised, as soon as possible, to acquaint him with the result. †

Lord Dartmouth failed not to perform his promise, and in no long time sent him notice that Lord North would be glad to see him. Dr Beattie accordingly waited on the minister, and was very politely received. Lord North told him, the King had read his book, and approved it, and that he would take an early opportunity of letting his Majesty know that he was in London.‡

In deliberating on the most probable mode by which some provision from government might be obtained for him, various schemes had been suggested by his friends. By some it had been proposed

* At that time first lord of the treasury, and prime minister of Great Britain; an office which he held for twelve years, and during the arduous and eventful period of the American war.

† I am enabled to give a circumstantial and exact account of every thing that took place, respecting Dr Beattie's obtaining his pension from the King, by having found among his papers a very curious and interesting Diary, which he had kept of the occurrences of this journey to London, from the time of his arrival there, to the date of his return home; in which he has recorded, with scrupulous fidelity, every event of any moment that befel him. Every visit of any consequence, which he paid or received, every person of any note whom he met with, he has mentioned; and even many conversations at which he was present, or in which he bore a part, he has recorded in the form of dialogue. It were tedious to insert the whole of the Diary. But I shall occasionally avail myself of it.

‡ MS. Diary, 21st May, 1773.

that he should take orders, and go into the Church of England, for which his habits of study had been by no means ill-suited, as he had originally attended the lectures of the professor of divinity, when at the university; and, at one time, he seems to have been not altogether averse from such a plan. His reasons for abandoning all ideas of that nature, however, will be seen in a subsequent letter. By others of his friends it was hoped, that he might obtain some civil appointment, suited to his talents, or, if not, some sinecure-office, of which there are many, in the West-Indies, the duties of which are discharged by a deputy on the spot, while a certain fixed salary or emolument remains with the principal at home. But at last, it was resolved, on the suggestion of the Archbishop of York, with the approbation of his other friends, that a memorial should be drawn up, expressing his services, his wants, and his wishes, which paper was to be laid before the King. This memorial he transmitted to Lord Dartmouth, by whom it was presented to his Majesty, who on that, as on other occasions, expressed himself in terms of high approbation in regard to him, and his writings, and desired to see him.*

In consequence of this gracious intimation, Lord Dartmouth undertook to carry him to the levee at St James's, and present him to the King.

While Dr Beattie was thus waiting, with the hope of experiencing some more substantial mark of royal favour, than bare approbation, he continued to receive every possible proof of the kindness and attachment of his private friends; the number of whom daily encreased, as the circle of society, in which he moved, became more extensive.†

* MS. Diary, 12th June, 1773.

† Among those who most eminently distinguished him by their politeness and attention, he could reckon Mrs Montagu, Lord Lyttelton, the Archbishop of York, the Earl of Dartmouth, Lord Mansfield, the Dutchess-dowager of Portland, Sir William and Lady Mayne, (afterwards Lord and Lady Newhaven) Lord Carysfort, Dr Porteus, now Bishop of London, Dr Markham, at that time Bishop of Chester, now Archbishop of York, Dr Percy, now Bishop of Dromore, Dr Moss, Bishop of St Davids, the Bishop of Bristol, Lord Dartry, Dr Parker, Rector of St James's, Dr Halifax, Professor of Law at Cambridge, the Archbishop of Canterbury, (Dr Cornwallis) Dr Moore, at that time Dean of Canterbury, afterward himself

From all of these he received the warmest commendations of his principles and his writings, as well as of his zealous efforts in the cause of virtue and religion.* Nor were they merely the slight and ordinary marks of formal acquaintance, that he received from so many persons of distinguished eminence. By many of those whom I have named, his society was eagerly sought for; and at the Dutchess-dowager of Portland's house, at Bulstrode,† at Sir William Mayne's, at Arno's Grove, and at Mrs Montagu's at Sandleford-Priory, Mrs Beattie and he spent occasionally some days; while they were prevented from accepting similar invitations from other friends, by his judging it proper to continue in London, until the fate of his application to the King was decided.‡ In short, I believe, I should not hazard much, were I to affirm, that it is without a parallel in the annals of literature, that an author almost totally a stranger in England, as Dr Beattie was, should, in less than the space of two years after the appearance of his "Essay on

Lord Archbishop; Dr Douglas, now Bishop of Salisbury, Sylvester Douglas, now Lord Glenbervie, Dr Hurd, the present Bishop of Worcester, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir John Pringle, President of the Royal Society, Mr Edmund Burke, Mr Garrick, Dr Samuel Johnson, Mr Cumberland, Mr and Mrs Vesey, Mr Langton, Mrs Carter, Mr John Hunter, Dr Majendie, Dr Goldsmith, Mr Hawkins Browne.

* MS. Diary, passim.

† Lady Margaret Cavendish Harley, only daughter and heiress of Edward, Earl of Oxford and Mortimer, by his wife the Lady Henrietta Cavendish, the only daughter and heiress of John Holles, Duke of Newcastle. She inherited from her father a noble estate, and lived, with splendid hospitality, at Bulstrode, in Buckinghamshire, which was the resort, not only of persons of the highest rank, but of those most distinguished for talents and eminence in the literary world. To the Dutchess-dowager of Portland, posterity will ever be indebted, for securing to the public the inestimable treasures of learning, contained in the noble MS. library of her father and grandfather, Earls of Oxford, *now* deposited in the British Museum, by the authority of Parliament, under the guardianship of the most distinguished persons of the realm, easy of access, and consequently of real use, to the philosopher, the statesman, the historian, the scholar, as well as the artist and mechanic.*

‡ MS. Diary, passim.

* Introduction to Astle's Origin and Progress of Writing, p. xxi.

"Truth," and his poem of the "Minstrel," emerge, from the obscurity of his situation in a provincial town in the north of Scotland, into such general and distinguished celebrity, without the aid of party-spirit, or political faction, or any other influence than what arose from the merit of these two publications, which first brought him into notice, and his agreeable conversation, and unassuming manners, which secured to him the love of all to whom he became personally known.

Nor, must I omit some still more substantial and flattering marks of friendship, which he has gratefully recorded in his Diary. Mrs Montagu, when speaking of the object of his journey to London, told him in very explicit, though delicate terms, that if government did nothing, she would herself claim the honour of rendering his situation in life more comfortable.* To this instance of generosity and friendship, he told her, he did not know what other answer to give, except that he did, and ever should, entertain a proper sense of it.

Not long after, he received a most unexpected, and still more exalted, mark of favour from her Majesty, to whom Dr Beattie had been mentioned by Dr Majendie,† at the desire of Lady Mayne, although altogether without his knowledge. The Queen was pleased to express to Dr Majendie her high approbation of Dr Beattie and his writings, wishing that it were in her power to do him a favour, and desired Dr Majendie to ask him, whether he would be willing to receive some present from her Majesty. After expressing to Dr Majendie the high sense of the honour her Majesty had done him, and of the favour she meant to confer, Dr Beattie informed him of the applications that had been made by his friends, to procure for him a pension from the King; and concluded, by desiring him to let the Queen know, that he would, with the utmost gratitude, receive any mark of favour she should be pleased to bestow; but that he was in hopes of receiving some provision from the King, in which case he should not wish to encroach on her Majesty's bounty. If, however, his application to the crown

* MS. Diary, 21st May, 1773.

† Prebendary of Worcester, who had at that time the honour of being instructor to the Queen, in the English and French languages;—the father of the present Lord Bishop of Chester.

should prove unsuccessful, any mark of the Queen's favour would be most acceptable.* From Dr Majendie he afterwards learned, that the Doctor had related to the Queen what had passed; with which her Majesty expressed herself extremely well-pleased; and said, the manner in which Dr Beattie had declined her offer, was a proof of his discretion, and that she had a still better opinion of him on that account. She added, that she would take the first opportunity to speak of him to the King; and, further, desired Dr Majendie to tell him, that she had read his book with great attention, that she highly approved of it, and had several times conversed upon it with the King.†

He has also recorded another instance of munificence. The Dutchess of Portland, while he was on a visit at Bulstrode, desired to speak with him in private, and after regretting the expence to which this journey to England must have subjected him, requested, in the frankest manner, that he would accept, of what she called a trifle, of one hundred pounds, in bank notes, which she held in her hand. He was greatly disconcerted, he adds, by such an extraordinary instance of generosity. But he declined to accept of her Grace's present, in a manner, as she was pleased to say, which gave her a very favourable opinion of him, and a very high idea of the liberality of his sentiments. He endeavoured to explain to her, that by frugality at home, and the price he had received for his writings, he had saved as much money, as would serve to defray the expence of this expedition; adding, at the same time, the probability of his soon receiving some encrease of income from government.‡

It will not be matter of wonder, that Dr Beattie should feel himself highly gratified, as well as flattered, by such eminent proofs of distinguished favour; a sentiment naturally encreased by the very gracious reception he experienced from his Majesty, to whom he was presented by Lord Dartmouth, at the levée, where he had the honour of kissing the King's hand. His Majesty spoke to him for four or five minutes with the most polite and cheerful affability; told him he had read his book, and approved of it greatly, as a work that was much wanted, and surely would do a great deal of

* MS. Diary, 13th June, 1773.

† MS. Diary, 15th June, 1773.

‡ MS. Diary, 28th June, 1773.

good: enquired how long time it cost him to compose it, and was pleased to say, that what he greatly admired in it, was the plainness and perspicuity of the reasoning, which must make it intelligible to every body, and which seemed to be perfectly unanswerable. The King repeated what he had said to Lord Dartmouth, who stood by, and who heartily joined in the same sentiments. His Majesty then asked, if any body had ever attempted to answer it; and on being told, that some anonymous writers had attacked it in the newspapers, and had abused him on account of his book, he said, that such abuse did honour to him and his work. Here the conversation ended. The levée was exceedingly crowded, which made it the more gratifying to him, that the King should honour him with so long a conference.*

Dr Beattie was afterwards to have been presented to the Queen, and several days were fixed on between Lord Dartmouth and him for that purpose; but it so happened, that on these days, the Queen held no drawing-room, and the presentation did not, at this time, take place.

Not a hint was dropped, however, at this time of his presentation, by the King, or by Lord North, who was at the levée, and spoke to Dr Beattie, of any intention of making some provision for him. But on the day following, he learned, with no small satisfaction, from Dr Majendie, that the Queen had informed him, that she knew it to be the King's resolution, to confer on him a pension of two hundred pounds a-year, but no notice was to be taken of this, until it should be announced to him in a regular form by the minister.

While he thus waited with a very excusable degree of anxiety for the fulfilment of this expectation, he received a mark of public approbation, of a very pleasing nature, by an honorary degree of doctor of laws being conferred on him by the university of Oxford. The first idea of his receiving this honour had been suggested to him by Mr Peckard, a clergyman, with whom he had become acquainted at Dr Porteus's house at Lambeth, and who proposed to mention the matter to Dr Markham, Bishop of Chester and Dean of Christ-Church.†

* MS. Diary, 30th June, 1773.

† Now Lord Archbishop of York.

The Bishop readily entered into the plan, to which he did not foresee that any objection could be made, as Dr Beattie's "Essay" was well known at Oxford, and had rendered him extremely popular there. The time fixed on for his receiving this honour from the university, was the approaching installation of Lord North, as chancellor of the university, on which occasion a number of degrees were, as usual, to be conferred; and Dr Beattie was directed to repair to Oxford, to be present on the occasion.

It was the original intention that it should be what is called a diploma-degree; by which he would have become entitled to all the rights and privileges of a member of the university. When the Bishop of Chester went to Oxford, however, a short time before the installation, and conversed on the subject with the vice-chancellor, it was represented as doubtful, whether a degree by diploma could, with propriety, be conferred on Dr Beattie, on account of his being a presbyterian. On this difficulty being communicated to Dr Beattie, he laid aside all thoughts of the matter. It was, therefore, not without considerable surprise, that he received a letter from the Bishop of Chester, from Oxford, informing him, "that "though the success of a diploma-degree in laws seemed doubtful, "(notwithstanding that all the heads of houses in the university "were as favourable as could be wished) an honorary degree did "not seem liable to any hazard; and that his name had been put "in the list of those who were to be so complimented, on the pre-"sent occasion. The Bishop desired him, therefore, to repair "immediately to Oxford."

Dr Beattie, who happened to come accidentally that morning from Sir William Mayne's, at Arno's Grove, to London, set out instantly for Oxford, where he arrived the same evening. He immediately waited on the Bishop of Chester, by whom he was received with the utmost kindness, and the day following, (9th July) the degree was conferred on him, in the theatre.*

* Some circumstances attended the conferring of this degree on Dr Beattie which were extremely flattering to him. About fifteen persons were admitted that day to the degree of doctor of laws; among which number was Sir Joshua Reynolds. When it came to Dr Beattie's turn, the Professor of Civil Law (Dr Vansittart,) whose business it is to present the graduates to the Chancellor, after mentioning his name and title, of professor of moral philosophy, in the university of Aberdeen, which is all that is usually said

On the next day he left Oxford, and returned to London, where he continued, without hearing any thing farther of the pension, until the 20th August, when he received a letter from Lord North's secretary, informing him officially, by his lordship's desire, that the King had been pleased to consent to a pension of two hundred pounds a-year being paid to him.

Thus, at length, he saw happily accomplished the object of the wishes of his friends and his own, by this provision, which his Majesty had been graciously pleased to make for him, and which, though not such as to place him in great affluence, was yet amply sufficient, with the emoluments of his professorship, for all his wants; and, together with the profit to be derived from his writings, to render him independent.

If any thing could add to the satisfaction he naturally felt from this fortunate conclusion of his affairs, it was the distinguished honour he met with, before he left London, of a personal and private interview with his Majesty, at the palace at Kew.

on the occasion, to his surprise, went on with a long Latin oration, in his praise, nearly to the following purpose; "whose writings and character are "too well known, to stand in need of any encomium from me. He has had "the singular fortune to join together, in the happiest union, the poetical, "and philosophical character. He is justly considered as one of the most "elegant poets of his time; and his fame, both as a philosopher and poet, "will be as permanent as that truth which he has so ably defended." This is but an abridgment of the speech, which was much more elegant in its composition, as well as more extravagant in its compliment. This speech, says Mr Williamson, who was present in the theatre, and heard it spoken, was much taken notice of at Oxford, on this occasion. He adds, it was certainly unpremeditated, as Dr Vansittart did not know, twenty minutes before he spoke it, that Dr Beattie was among the number of the graduates; and even after he knew it, he was in the middle of a crowd, so that notwithstanding its elegance, it was a temporary effusion, proceeding from the high character he had conceived of him from his writings, and which, continues Mr Williamson, I thought no study could have produced.

As soon as the degree is conferred, the graduate bows, and takes his place among the doctors, when there is generally a clap of approbation in the theatre, which is sometimes loud, and sometimes but faint. When it came to Dr Beattie's turn, the clapping of hands was so remarkably loud, and so long continued, as satisfied him, that he had more friends in the theatre, than he had any reason to expect; and that this honour was conferred on him with the heartiest good-will of all parties. Of those who received the degree at that time, Sir Joshua Reynolds and he were the only two who were distin-

Dr Beattie had been informed by Dr Majendie, who lived at Kew, and was often at the palace, that the King having asked some questions of the Doctor respecting him, and being told that he sometimes visited Dr Majendie there, his Majesty had desired to be informed the next time Dr Beattie was to be at Kew. What his Majesty's intentions were, Dr Majendie said he did not know; but supposed the King intended to admit him to a private audience. A day was therefore fixed, on which Dr Beattie was to be at Dr Majendie's house, early in the morning, of which the Doctor was to give notice to his Majesty. Of this interesting event, so honourable to Dr Beattie, I shall transcribe, in his own words, the account he has given in his Diary.

"Tuesday, 24th August, set out for Dr Majendie's at Kew-Green. The Doctor told me, that he had not seen the King yesterday, but had left a note in writing, to intimate, that I was to be at his house to-day; and that one of the King's pages had come to him this morning, to say, "that his Majesty would see me a little after "twelve." At twelve, the Doctor and I went to the King's house, at Kew. We had been only a few minutes in the hall, when the

guished by an encomium, and extraordinary applause. As soon as the ceremony was over, several of his friends bowed to him, from their seats in the theatre, particularly, Lord Dartmouth, Dr Thomas, Dean of Westminster, Dr Moore, Dean of Canterbury, Mr Thrale, Dr Parker, &c. &c. &c. who all, when the convocation broke up, came and paid their compliments to him; none with greater affection and politeness than Lord Dartmouth.

So great a concourse of people had been drawn to Oxford, from all quarters, to witness this installation of the prime minister, as chancellor of the university, that when Dr Beattie wished to return to London, neither carriage, nor horse, nor any mode of conveyance, was to be had on any terms; all being engaged for several days. After many fruitless attempts to get a post-chaise, he was preparing to set out on foot, as he was anxious to get back to town; when, happening to pay a visit to Mr John Pitt* and his lady, they, on hearing of his embarrassment, very kindly insisted on his accepting of the use of their post-chaise and four, to carry him the first stage on his road, where he could find post-horses for the rest of the way.†

* A gentleman of fortune in Dorsetshire, who honoured Dr Beattie, in a particular manner, with his friendship, and to whose kind intentions, in his favour, it will be seen hereafter, that he was much indebted.

† I state this account of the graduation of Oxford, from the MS. Diary, and from a letter to me, from Mr Williamson, who was present in the theatre on the occasion, and heard and saw the whole.

King and Queen came in from an airing, and as they passed through the hall, the King called to me by name, and asked how long it was since I came from town? I answered, about an hour. "I shall see you," says he, "in a little." The Doctor and I waited a considerable time, (for the King was busy) and then we were called into a large room, furnished as a library, where the King was walking about, and the Queen sitting in a chair. We were received in the most gracious manner possible, by both their Majesties. I had the honour of a conversation with them, (nobody else being present, but Dr Majendie) for upwards of an hour, on a great variety of topics, in which both the King and Queen joined, with a degree of cheerfulness, affability, and ease, that was to me surprising, and soon dissipated the embarrassment which I felt, at the beginning of the conference. They both complimented me, in the highest terms, on my "Essay," which, they said, was a book they always kept by them; and the King said he had one copy of it at Kew, and another in town, and immediately went and took it down from a shelf. I found it was the second edition. "I never stole a "book but one," said his Majesty, "and that was yours; (speaking "to me) I stole it from the Queen, to give it to Lord Hertford to "read." He had heard that the sale of "Hume's Essays" had failed, since my book was published; and I told him what Mr Strahan had told me, in regard to that matter. He had even heard of my being in Edinburgh, last summer, and how Mr Hume was offended on the score of my book. He asked many questions about the second part of the "Essay," and when it would be ready for the press. I gave him, in a short speech, an account of the plan of it; and said, my health was so precarious, I could not tell when it might be ready, as I had many books to consult before I could finish it; but, that if my health were good, I thought I might bring it to a conclusion in two or three years. He asked, how long I had been in composing my "Essay?" praised the caution with which it was written; and said, he did not wonder that it had employed me five or six years. He asked about my poems. I said, there was only one poem of my own, on which I set any value, (meaning the "Minstrel") and that it was first published about the same time with the "Essay." My other poems, I said, were incorrect, being but juvenile pieces, and of little consequence, even in my own opinion. We had much conversation on moral subjects; from which

both their Majesties let it appear, that they were warm friends to christianity; and so little inclined to infidelity, that they could hardly believe that any thinking man could really be an atheist, unless he could bring himself to believe, that he made himself; a thought which pleased the King exceedingly; and he repeated it several times to the Queen. He asked, whether any thing had been written against me. I spoke of the late pamphlet, of which I gave an account, telling him, that I never had met with any man who had read it, except one Quaker. This brought on some discourse about the Quakers, whose moderation, and mild behaviour, the King and Queen commended. I was asked many questions about the Scots universities, the revenues of the Scots clergy, their mode of praying and preaching, the medical college of Edinburgh, Dr Gregory, (of whom I gave a particular character) and Dr Cullen, the length of our vacation at Aberdeen, and the closeness of our attendance during the winter, the number of students that attend my lectures, my mode of lecturing, whether from notes, or completely written lectures; about Mr Hume, and Dr Robertson, and Lord Kinnoull, and the Archbishop of York, &c. &c. &c. His Majesty asked what I thought of my new acquaintance, Lord Dartmouth? I said, there was something in his air and manner, which I thought not only agreeable, but enchanting, and that he seemed to me to be one of the best of men; a sentiment in which both their Majesties heartily joined. "They say that Lord Dart-"mouth is an enthusiast," said the King, "but surely he says "nothing on the subject of religion, but what every christian may, "and ought to say." He asked, whether I did not think the English language on the decline at present? I answered in the affirmative; and the King agreed, and named the "Spectator" as one of the best standards of the language. When I told him that the Scots clergy sometimes prayed a quarter, or even half-an-hour, at a time, he asked, whether that did not lead them into repetitions? I said it often did. "That," said he, "I don't like in prayers; and excel-"lent as our liturgy is, I think it somewhat faulty in that respect." "Your Majesty knows," said I, "that three services are joined in "one, in the ordinary church-service, which is one cause of those "repetitions." "True," he replied, "and that circumstance also "makes the service too long." From this, he took occasion to speak of the composition of the church-liturgy; on which he very

justly bestowed the highest commendation. "Observe," his Majesty said, "how flat those occasional prayers are, that are now "composed, in comparison with the old ones." When I mentioned the smallness of the church-livings in Scotland, he said, "he "wondered how men of liberal education would choose to become "clergymen there," and asked, "whether in the remote parts of "the country, the clergy, in general, were not very ignorant?" I answered, "No, for that education was very cheap in Scotland, and "that the clergy, in general, were men of good sense, and com-"petent learning." He asked, whether we had any good preachers at Aberdeen? I said, yes, and named Campbell and Gerard, with whose names, however, I did not find that he was acquainted. Dr Majendie mentioned Dr Oswald's "Appeal," with commendation; I praised it too; and the Queen took down the name, with a view to send for it. I was asked, whether I knew Dr Oswald? I answered, I did not; and said, that my book was published before I read his; that Dr O. was well known to Lord Kinnoull, who had often proposed to make us acquainted. We discussed a great many other topics; for the conversation, as before observed, lasted for upwards of an hour, without any intermission. The Queen bore a large share in it. Both the King and her Majesty showed a great deal of good sense, acuteness, and knowledge, as well as of good nature and affability. At last, the King took out his watch, (for it was now almost three o'clock, his hour of dinner) which Dr Majendie and I took as a signal to withdraw. We accordingly bowed to their Majesties, and I addressed the King in these words: "I hope, Sir, your Majesty will pardon me, if I take this opportu-"nity to return you my humble and most grateful acknowledg-"ments, for the honour you have been pleased to confer upon me." He immediately answered, "I think I could do no less for a man, "who has done so much service to the cause of christianity. I shall "always be glad of an opportunity to shew the good opinion I have "of you." The Queen sat all the while, and the King stood, sometimes walking about a little. Her Majesty speaks the English language with surprising elegance, and little or nothing of a foreign accent. There is something wonderfully captivating in her manner, so that if she were only of the rank of a private gentlewoman, one could not help taking notice of her, as one of the most agreeable women in the world. Her face is much more pleasing than any of

her pictures; and in the expression of her eyes, and in her smile, there is something peculiarly engaging. When the Doctor and I came out, "Pray," said I, "how did I behave? Tell me honestly, "for I am not accustomed to conversations of this kind." "Why, "perfectly well," answered he, "and just as you ought to do."— "Are you sure of that?" said I.—"As sure," he replied, "as of "my own existence: and you may be assured of it too, when I tell "you, that if there had been any thing in your manner or conversa- "tion, which was not perfectly agreeable, your conference would "have been at an end, in eight or ten minutes at most." The Doctor afterwards told me, that it was a most uncommon thing for a private man, and a commoner, to be honoured with so long an audience. I dined with Dr and Mrs Majendie, and their family, and returned to town in the evening, very much pleased with the occurrences of the day." *

To close the account of the honours he received, at this time, in England, I must not omit to add the very high and pleasing compliment paid to him by Sir Joshua Reynolds, who requested Dr Beattie to sit for his picture, which that eminent master of painting executed in a manner that did equal credit to himself, and to Dr Beattie. For, not contented with his portrait merely, in the usual form, Sir Joshua, whose classical taste is well known, himself suggested the idea of an allegorical painting, which he actually finished, of admirable design, and exquisite skill in the execution. In this inestimable piece, which exhibits an exact resemblance of Dr Beattie's countenance, at that period, he is represented in the gown of Doctor of laws, with which he had been so recently invested at Oxford. Close to the portrait, the artist has introduced an Angel, holding, in one hand, a pair of scales, as if weighing "Truth" in the balance, and, with the other hand, pushing down three hideous figures, supposed to represent, Sophistry, Scepticism, and Infidelity;† in allusion to Dr Beattie's "Essay," which had been the

* MS. Diary, 24th August, 1773.

† Because one of these was a lean figure, and the other a fat one, people of lively imaginations pleased themselves with finding in them the portraits of Voltaire, and Mr Hume. But Sir Joshua, I have reason to believe, had

foundation of all his fame, and all the distinction that had been paid to him. The likeness of Dr Beattie was most striking; and nothing can exceed the beauty of the angel. The whole composition, as well as execution, is in the very best manner of that inimitable painter. And it has had the good fortune, not always the case with Sir Joshua's pieces, masterly as they are in every other respect, of perfectly preserving the colouring, which is as beautiful, at this distance of upwards of thirty years, as it was at first, with as much of mellowness only, as one could desire.

Of this admirable performance Sir Joshua was pleased to make Dr Beattie a present, of which he was very justly proud.* Sir Joshua Reynolds, indeed, had a great friendship for Dr Beattie, and paid him much attention, frequently entertaining him, both in town, and at his house on Richmond Hill; and testifying, by every means in his power, the admiration he felt of his genius and talents, and the opinion he held of the service he had rendered to the world by his writings. While Dr Beattie, on the other hand, loved Sir Joshua, for the amiable simplicity of his manners and character, and justly admired the masterly productions of his pencil, as well as duly appreciated his merit, in the composition of those truly classical discourses, which he delivered to the students, at the Royal Academy.

How properly he estimated the various talents of Sir Joshua Reynolds, will be seen by the following character, which he has drawn of him in his diary. I transcribe it in his own words; because, being a private record, merely of his thoughts, not meant for any eye but his own, it may be relied on, as speaking the genuine language of his heart.

no such thought, when he painted these figures. Dr Beattie, in one of his letters says, the figures represent Prejudice, Scepticism, and Folly, who are shrinking away from the light of the sun, that beams on the breast of the angel.

* This fine piece of painting, which Dr Beattie preserved with the utmost care, keeping it always covered with a green silk curtain, he left to his niece, Mrs Glennie, in whose possession it now is. A mezzotinto print was done from it, by Watson, when it was first painted. And the excellent engraving, prefixed to this work, will give some faint idea of the picture, as well as of Dr Beattie, to those who have not had the opportunity of seeing the originals.

"Sunday, 15th August, we proposed (Dr and Mrs Beattie) to have gone yesterday to Arno's Grove, but Sir Joshua Reynolds insisted on it, that we should stay till to-morrow, and partake of a haunch of venison with him to-day, at his house on Richmond Hill. Accordingly at eleven, Mrs Beattie, Miss Reynolds, Mr Baretti, and Mr Palmer, set out in Sir Joshua's coach for Richmond. At twelve, he and I went in a post-chaise, and by the way paid a visit to the Bishop of Chester, who was very earnest for us to fix a day for dining with him: but I could not fix one just now, on account of the present state of my affairs. After dining at Richmond, we all returned to town, about eight o'clock. This day I had a great deal of conversation with Sir Joshua Reynolds, on critical and philosophical subjects. I find him to be a man, not only of excellent taste in painting and poetry, but of an enlarged understanding, and truly philosophical mind. His notions of painting are not at all the same with those that are entertained by the generality of painters and critics. Artificial and contrasted attitudes, and groupes, he makes no account of; it is the truth and simplicity of nature, which he is ambitious to imitate; and these, it must be allowed, he possesses the art of blending with the most exquisite grace, the most animated expression. He speaks with contempt of those, who suppose grace to consist in erect posture, turned-out toes, or the frippery of modern dress. Indeed, whatever account we make of the colouring of this great artist, (which some people object to) it is impossible to deny him the praise of being the greatest "designer" of this, or perhaps of any age. In his pictures there is a grace, a variety, an expression, a simplicity, which I have never seen in the works of any other painter. His portraits are distinguished from all others, by this, that they exhibit an exact imitation, not only of the features, but also of the character of the person repesented. His picture of Garrick, between tragedy and comedy, he tells me, he finished in a week."

Dr Beattie has also strongly marked his high admiration of Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his "Essay on Poetry and Music,"* by joining his name with that of no less a painter than Raphael. Praising those two great masters, for taking their models from general nature, and avoiding, as far as possible, (at least in all their great per-

* Part I. ch. III. p. 393. ed. in 4to.

formances) those peculiarities that derive their beauty from mere fashion, he adds, " that on this account their works must give plea-" sure, and appear elegant, as long as men are capable of forming " general ideas, and of judging from them. The last mentioned " incomparable artist, (meaning Sir Joshua Reynolds) is particu-" larly observant of children," says Dr Beattie, " whose looks and " attitudes, being less under the control of art, and local manners, " are more characteristical of the species, than those of men and " women. This field of observation," Dr Beattie continues, " sup-" plied him with many fine figures, particularly that most exqui-" site one of Comedy, struggling for, and winning (for who can re-" sist her?) the affections of Garrick;—a figure which could " never have occurred to the imagination of a painter, who had " confined his views to grown persons, looking and moving in all " the formality of polite life;—a figure which, in all ages and coun-" tries, would be pronounced natural and engaging."

" Monday, 16th August, breakfasted with Sir Joshua Reynolds, who this day began the allegorical picture. I sat to him five hours, in which time he finished my head, and sketched out the rest of my figure. The likeness is most striking, and the execution masterly. The figure is as large as life. The plan is not yet fixed for the rest of the picture. Though I sat five hours, I was not in the least fatigued; for, by placing a large mirror opposite to my face, Sir Joshua Reynolds put it my power to see every stroke of his pencil; and I was greatly entertained to observe the progress of the work, and the easy and masterly manner of the artist, which differs as much from that of all the other painters I have seen at work, as the execution of Giardini on the violin differs from that of a common fidler. Mrs B. and I dined with Sir Joshua."*

* MS. Diary, 15th and 16th August, 1773. To the character of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr Johnson, whose intimate and beloved friend he was, bore the most emphatic testimony, when he declared him to be " the most " invulnerable man he knew; whom, if he should quarrel with him, he " should find the most difficulty how to abuse."

To that great artist, and excellent man, whose house, one of our mutual friends * has well denominated " the common centre of union for the great, " the accomplished, the learned, and the ingenious," I must equally pay my

* Boswell's Life of Johnson, vol. 1, ded. p. ii. iii.

At length, having obtained at the Treasury the warrant for his pension, and gone down to Sandleford-priory to bid adieu to Mrs Montagu, and to Arno's Grove to take leave of Sir William and Lady Mayne, Mrs Beattie and he set out on their return to Scotland, and arrived in Aberdeen on the 30th September, 1773; after an absence of somewhat more than five months.

I shall insert here some of Dr Beattie's correspondence, during his stay in England. In these letters will be found some details, confirming the account which I have given of Dr Beattie's visit to London, but which I forbore inserting at their proper dates, that I might not interrupt the course of the narrative.

LETTER LXV.

THE DUTCHESS-DOWAGER OF PORTLAND TO DR BEATTIE.

Bulstrode, July 13th, 1773.

I TAKE the first moment to return you my best thanks for the favour of your letter I have just received, as well as that of last week. The University have done themselves great honour, and I am glad the manner was agreeable. You must give me leave to differ from you in regard to yourself, but modesty is always the attendant on superior merit. Lord Dartmouth is not only valuable but amiable; your success will, I dare say, give him as much pleasure as to any of your well-wishers, in which number I hope you will allow me to subscribe myself, with the greatest esteem, &c. &c. &c.

grateful acknowledgments for the uninterrupted friendship with which he honoured me, as well as for an introduction to the notice of some distinguished characters, to whom I should not otherwise have had the means of being known.*

Sir Joshua Reynolds died in London, 23d February, 1792, aged 68.

* Boswell's Life of Johnson, vol. iii. p. 83, 84, ed. 3. 8vo. 1799.

"Mrs Delany* desires her best compliments to you and Mrs Beattie: I beg you will make mine acceptable to her, and I hope that I shall soon have the pleasure of seeing you both at Bulstrode."

* Mrs Delany's maiden name was Granville, the grand-daughter of the gallant Sir Bevil Granville, the faithful adherent of King Charles the first, for whose service, by his own popularity, jointly with other royalist gentlemen in Cornwall, an army was raised at their own expence, which he led into the west of England; but was unfortunately killed in the battle of Lansdown, near Bath, on the 5th July, 1643.*

Mrs Delany was first married to —— Pendarvis, Esq. a Cornish gentleman. Her second husband was the Reverend Dr Delany, Dean of Down, in Ireland, and the chosen friend of Swift. She long survived her husband; and during many years was the esteemed and intimate companion of the Dutchess-dowager of Portland, who generally spent her evenings, when in London, at Mrs Delany's, where was an assemblage of persons, the most distinguished for rank, as well as literary accomplishments. In return, Mrs Delany passed her summers with the Dutchess of Portland, at Bulstrode.

From a romantic and useless stretch of what she no doubt considered to be disinterested friendship, she had insisted, that the Dutchess of Portland should not make any provision for her in her will, notwithstanding that she was far from being in opulent circumstances; so that on the death of the Dutchess, Mrs Delany found herself reduced to a very circumscribed income. To the credit of their Majesties, to whom Mrs Delany had the honour of being well known, by her residence at the Dutchess of Portland's, whom the King and Queen often visited at Bulstrode, in the course of their morning-airings from Windsor-castle, as soon as they were informed of Mrs Delany's situation, on the Dutchess of Portland's death, they established her in a house at Windsor, with a pension of three hundred pounds a-year.

Mrs Delany was a woman of a cultivated understanding and refined taste, and particularly skilled in drawing and painting in oil. She executed, likewise, an herbal, or collection of plants, formed of coloured paper, so exactly resembling nature, as to be almost a deception, even to adepts in botanical science. Her collection amounted to the astonishing number of nine hundred and ninety, which it was her intention, had she lived, to have augmented to one thousand. The collection is now in the possession of her nephew, Barnard D'Ewes, Esq. of Welsburn, in Warwickshire.

Mrs Delany died in the year 1788, at the advanced age of eighty-eight.

* Clarendon, Vol. II. part i. p. 130, 284. ed. in 8vo.

LETTER LXVI.

DR BEATTIE TO DR PORTEUS.

London, 23d July, 1773.

"I HAVE been very much hurried of late by a variety of interesting matters, otherwise I should have sooner acknowledged the receipt of your most obliging letter of the 1st of July. The many favours I have had the honour to receive at your hands, affect me with the most lively gratitude, which I would fain attempt to express in words, but find, after repeated trials, that I cannot. All therefore that I shall now say on this subject is, that I shall ever cherish a most grateful remembrance of them.

"The business which I hinted at in my last still remains undetermined; and I, of consequence, am still confined to this town, or at least to the neighbourhood. I thank you for your good wishes; but I fear you far over-rate my talents, when you suppose, that London is the properest theatre for exerting them in. One thing at least is in my power; to employ, in whatever place Providence shall allot me, those intervals of health and leisure which may fall to my share, in vindicating, to the utmost of my poor abilities, the cause of truth, virtue, and mankind. If I shall be able to do any thing good in this way, my ambition will be completely gratified; and I shall have the satisfaction to think, that I am not altogether unworthy of the kindness and attention which I have met with from you, sir, and from others of your noble-minded countrymen.

"You have heard, perhaps, of my being at Oxford at the late installation. I went thither in consequence of a letter from the Bishop of Chester.* The University did me great honour. They were unanimous, not only in conferring the degree, but also ordering that it should be given to me free of all expence.

"I have not seen the poem you mention. Dr Hawkesworth's book I have seen, and read some parts of it. I do not think that the interests of science, or of mankind, will be much promoted by what I have read of this work; which, however, does not reflect

* Dr Markham, now Archbishop of York.

on the Doctor, who was no doubt obliged to tell his story in the very way in which he has told it. I am very apt to be distrustful of our modern travellers, when I find them, after a three months residence in a country, of whose language they know next to nothing, explaining the moral and religious notions of the people, in such a way, as to favour the licentious theories of the age. I give them full credit for what they tell us of plants and minerals, and winds and tides; those things are obvious enough, and no knowledge of strange language is necessary to make one understand them; but as the morality of actions depends on the motives that give rise to them; and as it is impossible to understand the motives and principles of national customs, unless you thoroughly understand the language of the people, I should suspect that not one in ten thousand of our ordinary travellers, is qualified to decide upon the moral sentiments of a new discovered country. There is not one French author of my acquaintance, that seems to have any tolerable knowledge of the English government, or of the character of the English nation: they ascribe to us sentiments which we never entertained; they draw, from our ordinary behaviour, conclusions directly contrary to truth; how then is it to be supposed, that Mr Banks and Mr Solander could understand the customs, the religion, government, and morals, of the people of Otaheite?

"Dr Hawkesworth, in his preface, has given an account of Providence, which, in spite of all my partiality in his favour, I cannot help thinking indefensible. But I need not say any thing on this subject, as you must have seen the whole passage in the newspapers. When my affairs are determined, which I hope will be soon, I shall take the liberty to write to you again."

LETTER LXVII.

MRS MONTAGU TO DR BEATTIE.

Sandleford, 14th July, 1773.

"IT is not possible to express the pleasure I felt from your letter last night. It is not on your account alone, I rejoice in the honours and marks of distinction and applause you received at

Oxford: I congratulate the University, I congratulate the age, on the zeal with which they pay regard to merit.

"I am here, at present, quite alone, which comes nearest to the happiness one finds in the society of those one loves best. Such perfect solitude is not good, but in very fine weather; solitude is a fine thing, says a French writer, but one wants a friend, to whom one can say, solitude is a fine thing. The gayest place of resort is still enlivened by the presence of a friend; and a friend does not diminish the tranquillity of retirement. I am not sure, that one should not find one's self in a more uneasy state of destitution, in the midst of a great town, in which one had not any very intimate friends, than when quite alone in the country. Where there are no enemies, one does not stand in need of allies, nor, where there are no dangers, of any auxiliaries. The little natives of the woods and meadows act in constant conformity to the laws of their nature, and when you have informed yourself of the qualities of the species, you are thoroughly acquainted with each individual. Here we have no caprices of the disposition, or peculiarities of interest, to attend to, and to fear. In this security the mind is free from little cares, and at leisure to contemplate the system of infinite wisdom and goodness, whose laws equally regulate the little course of the creeping insect, and the vast orbit of the rolling spheres. There is not any thing that more strongly impresses upon the mind a sense of the perpetual presence of the Deity, than seeing things, void of intelligence in themselves, ever progressing, without halt or deviation, error or untowardness, to complete their peculiar destination, and conspire with the laws which pervade the universal system. In these contemplations I have passed the long summer days, since I came hither, without feeling any *ennui*; yet I am not a disciple of the philosophers, *á quattre pattes*, who recommend savage life. I think it as great an abuse of philosophy, as of the human form, to stoop to the level of the brute animals. Philosophy is a holy thing, should keep erect, look up to Heaven, contemplate the stars, and adore their Maker. Seasons of recess and retirement are good for the mind, and give time to reflect on what we have done, and what we ought to do. Dr Beattie will give a voice to all the mute objects I now admire, and lead me farther in virtue and wisdom than I can advance by myself; so he must excuse my being impatient to see him.

"I wish very much for your being presented to the Queen; I take her to be a sovereign judge of merit, and I do not doubt of her being as gracious to you as his Majesty, and with the same elegance and propriety of manner. As I have a most loyal respect for the King, I have always taken great delight in the peculiar elegance of his language. It is a very essential thing in such great personages, whose words are always remembered, often repeated. I am extremely pleased with the obliging attentions the Bishop of Chester* shewed to you; his regard does honour. He is much respected."

LETTER LXVIII.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Arno's Grove, 26th July, 1773.

"YOUR most obliging and most excellent letter, of the 14th current, bore the impression of Socrates on the outside,† but judgment, better than that of Socrates, spoke within. He, if I mistake not, piqued himself on having constantly resided in Athens, and used to say, that he found no instruction in stones or trees; but you, madam, better skilled in the human heart, and more thoroughly acquainted with all its sublimer affections, do justly consider that quiet which the country affords, and those soothing and elevating sentiments, which "rural sights and rural sounds" so powerfully inspire, as necessary to purify the soul, and raise it to the contemplation of the first and greatest good. Yet, I think, you rightly determine, that absolute solitude is not good for us. The social affections must be cherished, if we would keep both mind and body in good health. The virtues are all so nearly allied, and sympathize so strongly with each other, that if one is borne down, all the rest feel it, and have a tendency to pine away. The more we love one another, the more we shall love our Maker; and if we fail in duty to our common parent, our brethren of mankind will soon discover that we fail in duty to them also.

* The present Lord Archbishop of York.

† This letter was sealed with a head of Socrates.

"In my younger days, I was much attached to solitude, and could have envied even "The shepherd of the Hebride isles, "placed amid the melancholy main." I wrote Odes to Retirement; and wished to be conducted to its deepest groves, remote from every rude sound, and from every vagrant foot. In a word, I thought the most profound solitude the best. But I have now changed my mind. Those solemn and incessent energies of imagination, which naturally take place in such a state, are fatal to the health and spirits, and tend to make us more and more unfit for the business of life: the soul, deprived of those ventilations of passion, which arise from social intercourse, is reduced to a state of stagnation, and, if she is not of a very pure consistence indeed, will be apt to breed within herself many "monstrous, and many "prodigious things," of which she will find it no easy matter to rid herself, even when she has become sensible of their noxious nature."

LETTER LXIX.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

London, 21st August, 1773.

"I HAVE at last received a letter from Mr Robinson,* dated yesterday, in which he tells me, "that he is desired by Lord North "to inform me that his majesty has been pleased to consent, that "a pension be paid me, of two hundred pounds a-year." Mr Robinson says, he will order the warrant to be made out for me immediately, and desires me to call for it at the treasury; which I shall do on Monday.

"And now, madam, allow me to congratulate you on the happy conclusion of this affair; for sure I am, you will take as much pleasure in it as I do. You may believe, I shall never forget from whom this long series of applications took its rise. But I shall not at present enter on this subject. I fear it will not be in my power to set out for Sandleford, till towards the end of the week,

* At that time secretary of the treasury.

as I have the warrant to get from the treasury, the court to attend, and a multitude of letters to write, to the Archbishop of York, Lord Kinnoull, Sir Adolphus Oughton, Lord North, &c. &c. As soon as I can possibly fix a time for setting out, I will write to you. Meantime, I beg to hear some account of your health.

"It is very good in you, madam, to flatter me with the hopes, that still better things may be in reserve for me. But I assure you, I think myself rewarded above my deservings, and shall most willingly sit down contented:—not to eat, or drink, or be idle, but to make such a use of the goodness of Providence, and his Majesty's bounty, as the public has a right to require of me. What I have now got, added to the emoluments of my present office, will enable me to live independently and comfortably in Scotland, and to cultivate those connexions and friendships in England, which do me so much honour. But more of this, when I have the happiness to see you.

"I am ashamed to send you so shabby a letter, all made up of shreds and patches. It is by mistake, owing to hurry, that I write on so many bits of paper; but as the post is just going out, I have no time to transcribe; and I would not keep back this intelligence for a single day.

"I have another piece of news to tell you, which will give you pleasure. Sir Joshua Reynolds, with whom I formerly told you that I have the happiness to be particularly acquainted, and whose talents, both as a painter, and as a critic and philosopher, I take to be of the very first rate, has planned out a sort of allegorical picture, representing the triumph of truth over scepticism and infidelity. At one corner of the picture, in the fore-ground, stands your humble servant, as large as life, arrayed in a Doctor of Laws' gown and band, with his "Essay on Truth" under his arm. At some little distance appears "Truth," habited as an angel, with a sun on her breast, who is to act such a part with respect to the sceptic and infidel, as shall show, that they are not willing to see the light, though they have the opportunity. My face (for which I sat) is finished, and is a most striking likeness; only, I believe, it will be allowed, that Sir Joshua is more liberal in the articles of *spirit* and *elegance* than his friend Nature thought proper to be. The angel also is finished, and is an admirable figure: and Sir Joshua is determined to complete the whole with all expedition, and to have a

print done from it. He is very happy in this invention, which is entirely his own. Indeed if I had been qualified to give any hints on the subject, (which is not at all the case) you will readily believe, that I would not be instrumental in forwarding a work that is so very flattering to me. The picture will appear at the Exhibition; but whether Sir Joshua means to keep it, or dispose of it, is not, I believe, determined."

LETTER LXX.

DR BEATTIE TO THE EARL OF KINNOULL.

London, 29th August, 1773.

"MRS MONTAGU's state of health is very indifferent; she complains of a feverish disorder, which has haunted her the greatest part of the summer. She is greatly afflicted at the death of our great and good friend, Lord Lyttelton. This event was unexpected; it is little better than a fortnight, since I received a very kind letter from him. The loss to his friends, and to society, is unspeakable, and irreparable: to himself his death is infinite gain; for whether we consider what he felt here, or what he hoped for hereafter, we must admit, that no man ever had more reason to wish for a dismission from the evils of this transitory life. His lordship died, as he lived, a most illustrious example of every Christian virtue. His last breath was spent in comforting and instructing his friends. "Be good and virtuous," said he, to Lord Valencia,* "for know "that to this you must come." The devout and cheerful resignation, that occupied his mind during his illness, did not forsake him in the moment of dissolution, but fixed a smile on his lifeless countenance. I sincerely sympathize with your Lordship, on the loss of this excellent man. Since I came last to town, I have had the honour and happiness to pass many an hour in his company, and to converse with him on all subjects: and I hope I shall be the better, while I live, for what I have seen, and what I have heard, of Lord Lyttelton."

* His son-in-law.

LETTER LXXI.

THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF YORK* TO DR BEATTIE.

Brodsworth, September 11th, 1773.

"YOUR letter, which gave me the pleasure of hearing of his Majesty's benevolence to you, went to Scotland, just as I left it, and came back here, t'other day; otherwise I should appear very tardy, in expressing the sensible satisfaction which I have, in your being rewarded, though not to the full of your merit, yet by a personal mark of the King's favour, and well-grounded opinion.

"I look upon this, not only as a distinguished reward of your merit, in the cause of virtue and truth, but as a beacon to those who are tossed about among the waves of infidelity. I believe, as I hope, that it will, in a *general* light *do good;* and *that* is the great purpose of the King; which he declared *to me*, when he first came to the crown; and you are one happy instrument, that carries this purpose forward, by your constant labours in defence of truth.

"I hope this pension will make you tolerably easy: whether it will so far procure you comfort, as that you should relinquish other views, you best know. I am clear, that this was the right plan at present, as the circumstances and opportunities presented themselves.

"I wrote to Lord Kinnoull, as soon as I got your letter, and it will give him great pleasure. I have since seen ——— ———— who is much pleased, both upon your account, and the service it may do to many people, particularly in Scotland, who run astray.

"I am sorry you give so indifferent an account of my excellent friend, Mrs Montagu; and rather a poor one of your own, and Mrs Beattie's health.

"Don't drop your correspondence, which will be always agreeable to me."

* The Honourable and Most Reverend Dr Robert Hay Drummond, brother to the Earl of Kinnoull, at that time Lord Archbishop of York.

LETTER LXXII.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 15th October, 1773.

"I PURPOSELY delayed for a few days to answer your letter, that I might be at leisure to think seriously, before I should venture to give my opinion, in regard to the important matter, about which you did me the honour to consult me. A religious education is indeed the greatest of all earthly blessings to a young man; especially in these days, when one is in such danger of receiving impressions of a contrary tendency. I hope, and earnestly wish, that this, and every other blessing, may be the lot of your nephew, who seems to be accomplished, and promising, far beyond his years.

"I must confess, I am strongly prepossessed in favour of that mode of education that takes place in the English Universities. I am well aware, at the same time, that in those seminaries, there are, to some young men, many more temptations to idleness and dissipation, than in our colleges in Scotland; but there are also, if I mistake not, better opportunities of study to a studious young man, and the advantages of a more respectable and more polite society, to such as are discreet and sober. The most valuable parts of human literature, I mean the Greek and Latin classics, are not so completely taught in Scotland as in England; and I fear it is no advantage, I have sometimes known it a misfortune, to those young men of distinction that come to study with us, that they find too easy, and too favourable an admittance to balls, assemblies, and other diversions of a like kind, where the fashion not only permits, but requires, that a particular attention be paid to the younger part of the female world. A youth of fortune, with the English language, and English address, soon becomes an object of consideration to a raw girl; and equally so, perhaps, though not altogether on the same account, to her parents. Our long vacations, too, in the colleges in Scotland, though a convenience to the native student, (who commonly spends those intervals at home with his pa-

rents) are often dangerous to the students from England; who being then set free from the restraints of academical discipline, and at a distance from their parents or guardians, are too apt to forget, that it was for the purpose of study, not of amusement, they were sent into this country.

"All, or most of these inconveniences, may be avoided at an English university, provided a youth have a discreet tutor, and be himself of a sober and studious disposition. There, classical erudition receives all the attentions and honours it can claim; and there the French philosophy, of course, is seldom held in very high estimation; there, at present, a regard to religion is fashionable; there, the recluseness of a college-life, the wholesome severities of academical discipline, the authority of the university, and several other circumstances I could mention, prove very powerful restraints to such of the youth as have any sense of true honour, or any regard to their real interest.

"We, in Scotland, boast of our professors, that they give regular lectures in all the sciences, which the students are obliged to attend; a part of literary economy which is but little attended to in the universities of England. But I will venture to affirm, from experience, that if a professor does no more than deliver a set of lectures, his young audience will be little the wiser for having attended him. The most profitable part of my time is that which I employ in examinations, or in Socratical dialogue with my pupils, or in commenting upon ancient authors, all which may be done by a tutor in a private apartment, as well as by a professor in a public school. Lectures indeed I do, and must give; in order to add solemnity to the truths I would inculcate; and partly too, in compliance with the fashion, and for the sake of my own character; (for this, though not the most difficult part of our business, is that which shows the speaker to most advantage) but I have always found the other methods, particularly the Socratic form of dialogue, much more effectual in fixing the attention, and improving the faculties of the student.

I will not, madam, detain you longer with this comparison: it is my duty to give you my real sentiments, and you will be able to gather them from these imperfect hints. If it is determined that your nephew shall be sent to a university in Scotland, he may, I believe, have as good a chance for improvement at Edinburgh or

Glasgow, as at any other: if the law is to form any part of his studies, he ought by all means, to go to one or other of these places; as we have no law-professors in any other part of this kingdom, except one in King's college, Aberdeen, whose office has been a sinecure for several generations. Whether he should make choice of Edinburgh or of Glasgow, I am at a loss to say: I was formerly well enough acquainted with the professors of both those societies, but *tempora mutantur*. Dr Reid is a very learned, ingenious, and worthy man, so is Dr Blair; they are both clergymen; so that, I am confident, your nephew might lodge safely and profitably with either. Whether they would choose to accept of the office of tutor to any young gentleman, they themselves only can determine; some professors would decline it, on account of the laboriousness of their office: it is partly on this account, but chiefly on account of my health, that I have been obliged to decline every offer of this sort."

LETTER LXXIII.

MRS MONTAGU* TO DR BEATTIE.

Sandleford, September 5th, 1772.

"PRAY have you met with Mr Jones's imitations of the Asiatic poetry? He possesses the oriental languages in a very extraordinary manner, and he seems to me a great master of versification. I wish he had given us translations, rather than imitations, as one is curious to see the manner of thinking of a people born under so different a climate, educated in such a different manner, and subjects of so different a government. There is a gaiety and splendour in the poems, which is naturally derived from the happy soil and climate of the poets, and they breathe Asiatic luxury, or else Mr Jones is, himself, a man of a most splendid imagination. The descriptions are so fine, and all the objects are so brilliant, *that the sense akes at them*, and I wished that Ossian's poems had been lay-

* This letter should have been inserted at p. 161. before letter LVII. which is in answer to it.

ing by me, that I might sometimes have turned my eyes, from the dazzling splendour of the eastern noonday, to the moonlight picture of a bleak mountain. Every object in these Asiatic pieces, is blooming and beautiful; every plant is odoriferous; the passions, too, are of the sort which belong to paradise. These things, as rarities brought from Arabia Felix, would give one great pleasure; but, when I am not sure they are not the dreams of a man who is shivering under a hawthorn hedge, in a north-east wind, I cannot resign myself enough to the delusion, to sympathize with them. Mr Jones has written some critical dissertations at the end of his poems, which, I think, shew him a man of good taste."

In the month of October, 1773, the chair of professor of natural and experimental philosophy, in the university of Edinburgh, became vacant, by the death of Dr James Russel, by whom it had been long ably filled. As that event had been for sometime foreseen, several gentlemen had turned their thoughts towards it, as candidates. But the magistrates, who are the electors, very properly resolved to be in no hurry in filling up the vacancy, in order that there might be time and opportunity to dispose of the chair in such a manner, as might best support the reputation of the university. As the winter session was soon to open, however, Dr Fergusson, professor of moral philosophy, agreed in the mean time, to deliver lectures also in natural philosophy, which he had formerly taught.

A few days after the death of Dr Russel, I received a visit from one of the magistrates, who was of my particular acquaintance, and who knew my intimacy with Dr Beattie. He came to inform me, he said, that several of the members of the town council kept themselves disengaged, until they should know whether Dr Beattie meant to become a candidate for the vacant chair. They were aware, he added, that Dr Beattie's eminence lay in another branch of science; but he said, he believed Dr Fergusson, who had formerly taught the class of natural philosophy, would be well pleased to resume it, and thereby leave the chair of moral philosophy open for Dr Beattie, which, he made no doubt, his high reputation would readily secure for him. I thanked the gentleman for this

warm expression of his esteem of Dr Beattie, on which I set the higher value, from being absolutely certain that they were strangers to each other; and that he interested himself, therefore, for Dr Beattie, merely from the consideration of his singular merit, and from a regard for the prosperity and reputation of the university of Edinburgh. For although a set of civil magistrates, very little, if at all, acquainted with science, or the merits of scientific men, may seem but indifferently qualified for the choice of professors of a university; yet it is a fact, which reflects no little credit on the magistrates of Edinburgh, that, in the election of professors, they have very seldom allowed themselves to be swayed by political interests; but have generally elected those, who have been deemed best qualified to fill the vacant chairs; justly considering the reputation and prosperity of the university to be of the greatest importance to the welfare of the city.

I lost no time in communicating this intelligence to Dr Beattie. I well recollected, indeed, the aversion he had shown, from becoming a member of the university of Edinburgh, on a former occasion, when a vacancy of the chair of moral philosophy was likely to take place; but I knew not whether he might still be of the same mind, or whether the same reasons still subsisted, which had weighed with him at that period; and therefore, I left it for himself to decide, what he should judge to be most conducive to his interest, or most consistent with his wishes. He well knew the earnest desire I had, that he should think of removing to Edinburgh, because I judged he might have it in his power to do more good here, than where he then was, by his talents having a wider range, and greater scope for the exertion of their influence. Perhaps, too, I will not deny, I may have been somewhat actuated by the selfish motive of his being brought nearer to his friends in Edinburgh; and our enjoying still more the happiness of his society.

The following letter is the answer I received to the communication I made to him on the subject.

LETTER LXXIV.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 22d October, 1773.

"THE late arrival of the post yesterday, put it out of my power to answer your most obliging letter in course. I shall not, at present, attempt to tell you (indeed I could not) how much my heart is touched, by the many kind and generous expressions of friendship, contained in your excellent letter: to be honoured with so great a share of the esteem and affections of such persons as you, is surely of all earthly blessings the greatest. But I shall proceed to business, without further preamble.

"Some years ago, I should have thought myself a very great gainer, by exchanging my present office with a professorship in the university of Edinburgh. Such an event would have doubled my income, without subjecting me to one half of the labour which I now undergo. But those were only secondary considerations. My attachment to Edinburgh arose, chiefly, from my liking to the people; and surely it was natural enough for me to love a place, in which I had, and still have, some of the dearest and best friends, that ever man was blessed with. Nor had I then any reason to fear, that either my principles, or the general tenor of my conduct, could ever raise me enemies in any christian society; it having been, ever since I had any thing to do in the world, my constant purpose to do my duty, and promote peace; and my singular good fortune, to obtain from all who knew me a share of esteem and regard, equal to my wishes, and greater than my deservings. Nor, at this time, are my affections to Edinburgh at all diminished. I am still known to some members of that university, whose talents, and whose virtues, I hold in the highest estimation, and with whom I should account it my honour, to be more nearly connected; and the favours I have received from very many persons of distinction in the place, demand my most hearty acknowledgments, and shall ever be cherished in my remembrance, with every sentiment that the warmest gratitude can inspire.

" And yet, my dear friend, there are reasons, and those of no small moment, which determine me to give up all thoughts of appearing as a candidate, on the present occasion; and which would determine me to this, even though I were absolutely certain of being elected. Nay, though my fortune were as narrow now, as it lately was, I should still incline rather to remain in quiet where I am, than, by becoming a member of the university of Edinburgh, to place myself within the reach of those, (few as they are) who have been pleased to let the world know, that they do not wish me well; not that I have any reason to mind their enmity, or to dread its consequences. They must not flatter themselves, that they have ever been able as yet to give me a moment's uneasiness, notwithstanding the zeal with which they have spoken against me. My cause is so good, that he, who espouses it, can never have occasion to be afraid of any man. I know my own talents, and I am not ignorant of theirs; I do not (God knows) think highly of the former, indeed I have no reason; but I am under no sort of apprehension in regard to the latter; and as to the esteem of others, I have no fear of losing it, so long as I do nothing to render me unworthy of it. But I am so great a lover of peace, and so willing to think well of all my neighbours, that I do not wish to be connected even with one person who dislikes me.

" Had I ever injured the persons whom I allude to, I might have hoped to regain their favour by submission, (which in that case would have become me) and by a change of conduct. But, as they are singular enough to hate me for having done my duty, and for what, I trust, (with God's help) I shall never cease to do, (I mean, for endeavouring to vindicate the cause of truth, with that zeal which so important a cause requires) I could never hope that they would live with me on those agreeable terms, on which I desire to live with all good men, and on which, by the blessing of providence, I have the honour and the happiness to live with so great a number of the most respectable persons of this age.

" I must therefore, my dear friend, make it my request to you, that you would, in better terms than any I can suggest, in terms of the most ardent gratitude, and most zealous attachment, return my best thanks to the gentlemen of your council, for the very great honour they have been pleased to confer upon me; and tell them, that the city and university of Edinburgh shall ever have my sin-

cerest good wishes, and that it will be the study of my life, to act such a part, as may, in some measure, justify their good opinion; but that I must, for several weighty reasons, decline appearing as a candidate, for the present vacant professorship."

In consequence of this reply from Dr Beattie, which, of course, I communicated to the gentleman, who had addressed himself to me on the subject, I laid aside all thoughts of the matter.

Some months afterwards, Dr Beattie informed me, that some person, no doubt with a friendly intention, without his knowledge, had told Lord Dartmouth, that he was a candidate for the professorship; on which his Lordship had written to Sir Adolphus Oughton, offering his services to promote Dr Beattie's views. In consequence of this communication he wrote to me, expressing his regret that his friends should have had so much trouble on his account; that he had in part communicated to Sir Adolphus his reasons for declining to be a candidate, but had referred him to me for further particulars, and desired me to shew to Sir Adolphus Oughton his letter to me of the 22d October, which I accordingly did. When Sir Adolphus sent it back to me, he accompanied it with the following note. "Returns to him Dr Beattie's very judi-"cious letter. Sir A. imagines it was a view of serving the worthy "Doctor, and rendering him more diffusively useful to his fellow "subjects, not any solicitations from hence, that induced his "Majesty's confidential servants to wish he might fill the moral "philosophy chair at Edinburgh."

When I sent him this communication from our mutual friend, I wrote to him at the same time to the following effect. "Since "that time, I have had occasion to hear the sentiments of many of "your warmest friends, as well as of many persons of respectable "character, who, like numberless others, have attached themselves "to you, without a personal acquaintance, and all join, with one "voice, in expressing their wishes that you could be prevailed on "to think more favourably of changing your present situation. "But what induces me to resume this subject particularly at "present, is a conversation which I had yesterday at New Hailes. "I chanced to have your two letters in my pocket, which I gave to

" Lord Hailes to read:* knowing how highly he esteems you, and " how excellent a judge he is of every point like that in question. " His Lordship expressed the greatest concern at the reluctance " you show against coming to Edinburgh, and more than once re- " peated, that he was not at liberty to say all that he could say on that " head. He was kind enough to request I would write to you, that " such were his sentiments; and to beseech you to treat with the " greatest contempt any idea of your meeting with any thing disa-

* Sir David Dalrymple, baronet, one of the judges of the supreme courts of civil and criminal law of Scotland, by the title of Lord Hailes; very eminent as a scholar, and particularly as an antiquarian. His " Annals of Scot- " land" is a masterly performance, in which, and in some detached pieces of historical research, he was the first to elucidate properly the early part of the history of our country: and it is only to be regretted that he has not brought his work down to a later period, as it stops at a time when the history was becoming more and more interesting, and his materials more copious. " The " case of the Sutherland-peerage," although originally a law paper, written professionally when he was at the bar, at the time when the title of the young Countess to the honours of her ancestors was called in question, is one of the most profound disquisitions on the ancient peerages of Scotland any where to be met with.

In his other publications, which were numerous, he chiefly appears in the character of an editor. Among these, he translated and printed some favourite passages from the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius, and other writers, respecting the early history of the Christian church. In those publications he never omitted any opportunity of exposing the mistakes and misrepresentations of Gibbon, in professed opposition to whom, Lord Hailes wrote " An Inquiry into the secondary Causes which Mr Gibbon has assigned " for the rapid growth of Christianity," which is justly considered as one of the ablest replies that have appeared in opposition to the sneers against Christianity, so frequently to be met with in the works of that popular, but artful and dangerous writer. As a proof of his attention to every thing that concerned religion and good morals, the following incident should not be omitted.——Two vessels, bound from London to Leith, were cast away on the coast between Dunbar and North Berwick, and two-and-twenty persons drowned; the wrecks having been shamefully pillaged by the country-people, Lord Hailes immediately wrote a pamphlet, with the title of " A Sermon " which might have been preached in East Lothian upon the 25th day of " October 1761, on Acts xxvii. 1, 2. *The barbarous people showed us no little* " *kindness.*" This he caused to be printed, and dispersed among the country people in the neighbourhood, where the fatal disaster had happened. It is a most affecting discourse, admirably calculated to convince the offenders; and the effect of it is said to have been such, that several parcels of the goods,

"greeable in carrying this removal into execution. For he added, "what I most firmly believe to be the truth, that he apprehended "many of what appeared unpleasant circumstances to you would "totally vanish, or that, in all events, you ought to be greatly su-"perior to any such fears."

So anxious was Lord Hailes on this subject, that next day he wrote to me no less than two letters, which I failed not to transmit, by the first post, to Dr Beattie.

LETTER LXXV.

LORD HAILES TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

New Hailes, 15th April, 1774.

"I AM sorry to understand that Dr Beattie expresses a great unwillingness at being proposed to fill the chair of moral philosophy at Edinburgh, which, in all probability, will soon be vacant.

"If the Doctor thinks he can be as generally useful where he is, he cannot be blamed for wishing to continue where he is. But if he is persuaded that his sphere of usefulness may be enlarged, by his removal to Edinburgh, I do not see how he can, in consistency with his known principles, decline that station, where he will be more known, and have a more ample field of benefiting the rising generation.

that had been plundered, were brought privately to the church, and deposited there, after the perusal of the sermon. He published likewise, a Collection of Sacred Poems, consisting of translations and paraphrases from the Holy Scriptures, which do equal credit to his piety and his poetical taste. As a proof, however, that he did not entirely confine his studies to subjects of a grave and dignified cast, he was also the editor of a Collection of Ancient Scottish Poems, from the "Bannatyne-Manuscript," in the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh; and he contributed some papers to the two periodical publications, the "World," published at London, and the "Mirror," at Edinburgh, which contain no inconsiderable portion of humour. He died 29th November, 1792.

"The magistrates of Edinburgh have shown a zeal almost without example, of supplying all the vacant professorships with the persons held to be the best qualified. In this, they have renounced every party view, every private connexion. Should Dr Beattie obstinately decline their solicitations, it is more than an equal chance that the difficulty which they find in perfecting their noble plan, may lead them insensibly to accept of the most powerful recommendations, and thus suffer things to go on in the easiest way: thus things will turn into a corrupted channel. Should a man of mean abilities, or of dubious principles, fill the chair which Dr Beattie might have filled, *who* must answer for the good which such a person does not, or for the ill which he may do?

"I wish that Dr Beattie could be brought to see this in the strong light in which I see it. There are many things which might be said, and which are not fit for a letter; many things which, at present, cannot be spoken. It may be supposed that Dr Beattie imagines that his works have procured him enemies, and that those enemies will be more formidable in Edinburgh than in Aberdeen. But surely he will not find those enemies among the members of the university. I could insure him against *that* for a very moderate premium. If they that are against him are more than they that are for him; I have no more to say.

"He knows that he and I differed as to some particulars, and that I thought something might have been taken from the edge of his style, yet so as to leave it the power of cutting deep enough. But that is a matter of taste and opinion. They, who have felt the sharpness of his weapon, will not provoke it.

"If he is affected with obloquy, I wish he were a judge for six months, and, then he would find that unless a man can have patience to contemn the gainsayers, he will have little comfort in the plain path of duty."

LETTER LXXVI.

LORD HAILES TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

New Hailes, 16th April, 1774.

"SINCE I had the pleasure of seeing you, I have a letter from London, mentioning Lord Mansfield's zeal for Dr Beattie. I do not consider myself at liberty to mention who my correspondent is; he is a man not much given to applaud indiscriminately, and one who thinks highly of Dr Beattie.

"The more that I think of this affair, the more I am persuaded that Dr Beattie's terrors are panic. I impute them to bad health and a vegetable diet. My poor old friend Dr M'Kenzie of Drumsheugh imputed the errors of the later Platonists to that ascetic diet.

"If Dr Beattie would consider, that in his lectures he is to unfold a system of truth, and that he may confute all the nonsense and irreligion that has appeared since the days of Cain even unto our days, without ever mentioning the name of any theorist or sceptic, he will not consider the intended station as so formidable.

"Should he dislike his office, he may leave it; he will always find a decent retirement into some sequestered recess of literature.

"I am not sure that it is a very Christian sentiment, yet I must say, that a rebuff at this time will be very discouraging, especially when we ourselves have the ball at our foot. If the friends of religion, and they who consider the value of religious education, are to have no aid where that might be expected, what is to come next? If Dr Beattie shrinks, will not every man of ability shrink too?"

To these communications from Lord Hailes, which I expected would have produced some effect in making him yield to the solicitation of his friends, I had the mortification, however, of receiving the following copious reply.

LETTER LXXVII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 19th April, 1774.

"I HAVE just received your two letters of the 16th current, inclosing two from Lord Hailes to you, which, according to your desire, I return under this cover. I cannot sufficiently thank you, or his Lordship, for your zealous good wishes, and for the very favourable opinion you and he are pleased to entertain of me. As I desire nothing more earnestly, than to secure the continuance of that favourable opinion, I must beg leave to be somewhat particular in answering two accusations, which, from two passages of his Lordship's letter, I have reason to fear are likely to be brought against me, even by my friends. It is insinuated, that my disinclination to resign my present employment, may be the effect of *obstinacy*, or of *fear*.

"Now, I humbly think, that when a man's conduct, and the reasons of it, are approved by a very great majority of those who are acquainted with both, it would be rather hard to charge him with *obstinacy*, for adhering to such conduct. And most certain it is, that, by all my English friends to whom I have had occasion to explain the affair in question, and by many respectable friends in Scotland, this conduct of mine, and the reasons of it, have been highly approved. Another thing, too, on this head, deserves attention. A man should not be accused of obstinacy, till he have told *all* his reasons, and till it appear that they are *all* unsatisfactory. I have never told *all* my reasons; I have told those only which are of a less private nature: other reasons I could specify; but they are of such a sort, that I should think it petulance to obtrude them on the public.

"To the second accusation, I know not whether I can decently reply. When I see a man solicitous to prove that he is sober, I generally take it for granted, that he is drunk; and when one is at pains to convince me that he is brave, I am apt to set him down for a coward. Whether I deserve to be considered as a timorous as-

serter of good principles, I leave the world to judge, from what I have written, and from what I have done and said on occasions innumerable. Many hundreds in Great Britain, and some too elsewhere, think, that no Scottish writer, in my time, has attacked the enemies of truth with less reserve, and confuted them more zealously, than I have done. I have declared, in a printed book, which bears my name, that I detest their principles, and despise their talents; and that very book is, in the opinion of many, a proof that I have no reason to retract the declaration. What I have avowed, I am still ready to avow, in the face of any man upon earth, or of any number of men; and I shall never cease to avow, in plain language, and without concealment or subterfuge, so long as the Deity is pleased to continue with me the use of my faculties. I cannot think that my friends will treat me so hardly, as to give out, that I fear every thing which I dislike. I dislike the croaking of frogs, and the barking of curs; but I fear neither. I dislike the conversation of infidels; but I know not in what sense I can be said to fear it. I should dislike very much to live in a society with crafty persons, who would think it for their interest to give me as much trouble as possible, unless I had reason to think, that they had conscience and honour sufficient to restrain them from aspersing the innocent; yet, if my duty were to call me thither, I should not be in the least afraid to live in such a society; for I know, that, while an honest man does his duty, the world seldom fails to do him justice. As to *obloquy*, I have had a share of it, as large as any private man I know; and I think I have borne it, and can bear it, with a degree of fortitude, of which I should not need to be ashamed, even if my station were as public, and as important, as that of a judge. Every honest man, whether his station be public or private, will do his duty without minding obloquy, which, in fact, was never more harmless than at present, because it never was more common. Convince me that it is my duty to remove from hence to Edinburgh, and you shall see me set out immediately, as regardless of the snarling of my enemies there, as of that of the curs, who might snap at my heels by the way. So very little ground is there for suspecting me of an inclination to *shrink* from my principles, that one chief reason which determines my present choice is, that I may have the more leisure to apply myself to those studies, which may tend to the further confutation of error, and illustration of truth: so that, if they think

I have any talents in this way, and if they know what my present resolutions are, my adversaries would wish me rather in Edinburgh, where I should have but little leisure, than at Aberdeen, where I have a great deal. On this account, as well as on others, I am morally certain, that I shall have it in my power to do more good to society, by remaining where I am, than by moving to Edinburgh.

"That I am entirely useless in my present profession, is not the opinion of those in this country, who have access to know how I employ myself. My lectures are not confined to my own class. I do what no other professor here ever did, and what no professor in any other part of Great Britain can do; I admit, together with my own students in moral philosophy, all the divinity students of two universities, who are willing to attend me; and I have often a very crowded auditory; and I receive fees from nobody, but from such of my own private class as are able to pay them. Nobody ever asked me to do this, and nobody thanks me for it, except the young men themselves; and yet, in all this there is so little merit, it being as easy for me to lecture to a hundred as to thirty, that I should not have thought it worth mentioning, except with a view to obviate an objection, that seems to be implied in some things, that have been thrown out at this time.

"So much for my duties to the public, to which, I would fain hope, it will be found, that I am not quite insensible. But, according to my notions of morality, there are also duties which a man owes to his family, and to himself: nor is it, in my opinion, incumbent on any man to overlook the latter, merely because it is possible that, by so doing, he might discharge the former more effectually. I do not think it the duty of any particular Christian, of you, for instance, or Mr Arbuthnot, or myself, to relinquish his family, friends, and country, and to attempt the conversion of the Indians; and yet, it is not absolutely impossible, but that, by so doing, he might perform a great deal of good. My health and quiet may be of little consequence to the public, but they are of very considerable consequence to me, and to those who depend upon me; and I am certain, that I shall have a much better chance of securing both, by staying where I am, than by removing to Edinburgh. Dr Gregory was of this opinion: I can show his hand-writing for it; and this is the opinion of many others. I have more reasons than the world knows of, to wish to pass the latter part of my days in

quiet; and the more quiet, and the more health I enjoy, the more I shall have it in my power to exert myself in the service of the public.

"To what Lord Hailes adds, in the conclusion of his letter, about my leaving the office in question, if I found it disagreeable, in the hopes of finding some decent retirement elsewhere, I make no reply: I only say, that I wonder at it. I wish there were more foundation for his humorous conjecture about my food: if I could eat vegetables, I should think myself a great man: but alas! the state of my health is such, that I dare not indulge myself in that wholesome diet.

"I hope his Lordship will now be convinced, that I am neither whimsical nor timorous in this affair. The reasons I have specified, have been admitted as valid by many persons, whose judgment in other matters he would allow to be good, if I were to name them; which I would do, without scruple, if I thought it necessary.

"I shall only add, what you, my dear friend, know to be a truth, and what I can bring the fullest evidence to prove, that my present disinclination to an Edinburgh professorship is not the consequence of any late favourable change in my circumstances. The very same disinclination I shewed, and the same reasons I urged, more than two years ago, when I had no prospect of such a favourable change.

"To conclude; every principle of public and private duty forbids me to comply with this kind solicitation of my friends; and I will add, that nothing but a regard to duty could have determined me to resist so kind a solicitation. I am certain, the city of Edinburgh can find no difficulty in procuring an abler professor than I am. I heartily wish it may ever flourish in learning, and in every useful and honourable art; and I shall ever retain a most grateful sense of the honour which so many of its inhabitants have done me, on this occasion.

"I ask pardon for not answering your letter sooner. My health is just now in such a state, (the confinement occasioned by my broken arm having brought back many of my old complaints,) that I am not able to write more than a few sentences at a time, without suffering for it.

"I have not said a word on the subject of interest. It is evident to me, and I think I could prove to your satisfaction, that the change, now proposed, would be detrimental in that respect. But this consideration should not deter me from making the change, if my duty required me to make it. And yet, even if I were to pay *some* attention to interest in an affair of this kind, I do not believe that the world in general would blame me, considering that I have others to provide for, besides myself. It may be said, indeed, that, having already gotten as much as might support me independently on my office, which is more than I deserve, I have no right to extend my views to interest any further. I admit the fact; but I deny the inference, in which I will not believe any man to be serious, till he show me, by his own conduct, that he thinks it valid.

"The reasons I have here specified, I wish to be as generally known, in and about Edinburgh, as you may think necessary, for the vindication of my character."

This letter was inclosed in the following

LETTER LXXVIII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 23d April, 1774.

"THE long letter, inclosed, you are to consider as an answer, not to yours, but to those of Lord Hailes to you. I know, not only the goodness, but the generosity and gentleness of your heart; and, I am sure, you would never wish me to do a thing disagreeable to me, if I could, with a clear conscience, avoid it. Our learned and worthy friend seems to think, that my interest and gratification ought to be entirely out of the question; in this, I know, you will differ from him, as well as in some insinuations touching my character, which, I confess, pique me a little. But this *entre nous*.

I have the greatest regard for him, notwithstanding, on account of his learning and worth; and I am pretty certain he has a regard for me; but I thought it was best to speak plain, and put an end to the affair at once. Be assured, that I did not form my present resolution without very good reason."

It was obviously Dr Beattie's intention, that I should transmit this letter to Lord Hailes, as containing a full statement of our friend's determination, and of his reasons for it. But I confess, the letter did not altogether please me. I thought it written in a tone somewhat too peremptory, in reply to so well-meant a communication. On consulting with two of our most intimate friends, who entirely agreed with me in my opinion of the letter, I resolved not to send it to Lord Hailes, but rather to copy out some paragraphs from it, which I transmitted to him. At the same time, I thought it right to send to Dr Beattie an exact copy of what I had thus written. The following letters, which I received in reply, closed the correspondence on the subject.

LETTER LXXIX.

LORD HAILES TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

New Hailes, 29th April, 1774.

"I AM sorry to see that Dr Beattie is so resolved: I do not see that more can be said; he seems to be dissatisfied with something that you and I have said, I am sure without reason. *Who* the people are, whose judgment I would think good in other matters, and who have confirmed him in his resolutions, I know not, nor can I venture to guess: I possibly suspect one, of whose sound head, and distinguished abilities, I have a just sense; but he and I do not always think in the same way. I could mention men, well known in the literary world, dead and alive, who thought and think very differently from some of the Doctor's friends, but I have my

reasons for being silent as to names. Since this affair has taken so unfortunate a turn, you and I have done what we thought right, Dr Beattie has done what he thought right, and there is no more to be said; I hope that all will be for the best.

"When you write to Dr Beattie, please assure him, in the warmest manner, of my good wishes and regard."

LETTER LXXX.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 8th May, 1774.

"I HAVE this moment received your packet, which I shall answer, at some length, hereafter. In the meantime, I take the opportunity to tell you, by the return of the post, that your conduct, in the whole of this business, is prudent, benevolent, and friendly. I beg, therefore, you may make your mind perfectly easy on that head. Show this letter to Mr Arbuthnot."*

As I wished to show at once the whole of the correspondence respecting the Edinburgh professorship, in order that what passed on that occasion may be the more distinctly known, I delayed to insert the following letters, which were written in the interval, between the two periods of that correspondence.

* In this letter, which was ostensible, I found inclosed a slip of paper, on which he had written to me the following most affectionate note:

"I cannot help telling you on this scrap, that I could have wished you had been entirely determined by your own judgment, in the affair of the letter. Not that there was any harm in consulting those two friends, whom nobody on earth can honour more than I do; but because I wish you to believe, that your opinion alone is at any time sufficient authority with me, for the propriety of any measure, you may be pleased to recommend. There is not a thought of my heart, which I wish to conceal from you; and I have been long accustomed to lay my mind open to you, with less reserve, than to any body else; indeed, without any sort of reserve at all. It may, therefore, sometimes happen, that I shall write to you, what I would not wish any body else to read."

LETTER LXXXI.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 18th December, 1773.

"MY studies proceed so slowly, that I can hardly be said to study at all; which, after what I have told you, will not appear surprising. I have, however, added largely to my discourse on classical learning, and have been looking out for materials, towards the finishing of my other little essays. If the subscription-affair succeed, I hope I shall have every thing in readiness in due time. —I understand, by a letter from Mr Gregory, to one of his friends here, that he has been obliged to lay aside the scheme of publishing his father's works in one volume; two of the treatises being (it seems) the property of Dodsley the bookseller: this has made me postpone, to a time of more leisure, what I intended to write on the subject of the Doctor's character. I knew that Mr Gregory * would please you: he is, indeed, an excellent young man; I know not whether I ever have met with one of his years, whose heart was so good, or whose understanding was so thoroughly improved.

"I had the honour of a letter, lately, from the Dutchess of Portland, which I will answer soon. Mrs Delany's misfortune gave great concern to Mrs Beattie and me; but as you mention nothing of it, we are satisfied that the danger is now over.

* Dr James Gregory, (eldest son of the late Dr John Gregory) a physician of the first eminence, at present, in Edinburgh, and who fills the chair of *Professor of the Practice of Physic*, in that university, with such distinguished ability. From a youth, he enjoyed the friendship of Dr Beattie, as it were by hereditary right: and at all times endeavoured, by his medical skill, to contribute to the restoration of the health of one who had been so dear to his father, and whom he himself so highly esteemed and respected. The elegant and classical inscription, for Dr Beattie's monument at Aberdeen, which will be found hereafter, is of Dr Gregory's composition. I have already mentioned † the intimate friendship with which the late Dr Gregory honoured me, and I am proud to boast of its continuance with his son.

† P. 24.

"It gives me pleasure to hear, that your nephew finds Edinburgh so much to his mind. Mr Arbuthnot will do every thing in his power to make it agreeable to him. To the soundest principles, and to the best heart, to a very extensive knowledge both of men and books, and to great delicacy and correctness of taste, Mr Arbuthnot joins a vein of pleasantry and good humour, peculiar to himself, which renders his conversation equally agreeable and instructive. His character, in many particulars, resembles that of his namesake and near relation, the famous Dr John Arbuthnot; but my friend has none of those singularities of manner, which sometimes rendered his great kinsman somewhat ridiculous. I am convinced that your nephew and he will be mutually agreeable to each other; and as Mr Arbuthnot is well acquainted with every body in Edinburgh, he is one of the properest persons there, to give advice to the other, in regard to his company. I shall write to Mr Arbuthnot, in a few days, and tell him what you say of him, which, I know, will make him very happy.*

"I know not, whether, in a former letter, I did not give you some account of an offer I lately had, from some of the town-council of Edinburgh, of their interest of bringing me into that university, in which, at present, there is a professorship vacant. I thanked them in the best manner I could; but, for several reasons, some of which I specified to them, and with all of which you are well acquainted, I begged leave to decline the offer.

"Yesterday's post brought me a letter from the Archbishop of York: It is more than friendly, it is an affectionate letter. His Grace had written to me soon after my return to Scotland, to congratulate me on my late success; and, by a very delicate hint, he gave me an opportunity of explaining, whether I would now confine my future views to this country, or make any further efforts to rise higher in the world. My answer to that part of his Grace's letter was to the following purpose:

"That my late success was greater than I had any reason either to expect or wish for; that I considered myself as rewarded beyond my deservings; that the provision, now made for me, was sufficient to procure for me, at Aberdeen, every convenience of life which I had any right to aspire after; that I had neither spirits nor

* See p. 20.

bodily health to qualify me for a life of bustle and anxiety; and that I might perhaps be as useful in my present station, as in any other; that, therefore, to give my friends any further trouble in seconding my views, would, in my judgment, be to presume too far upon their generosity, and my own merit. The archbishop approves highly of these sentiments. "Your resolution (says he) "to employ your time and endeavours to promote the cause of "truth, and your content to remain in Scotland with your present "provisions, is worthy of you; * * * and though your entry "into our church would have been a happy acquisition to it, yet I "cannot but applaud your determination."

At the time when Dr Beattie went to London, in the year 1773, and when it was very uncertain whether he might ever receive any substantial mark of his Majesty's royal approbation, his friends in London, seeing how much he and his family stood in need of some farther emolument, than what merely arose from his professorship, projected a scheme of publishing there, by subscription, an edition of his "Essay on Truth," by which, it was hoped, a considerable sum might be raised. It was by no means intended to advertise it publicly; but merely to conduct it privately, by means of a few of his particular friends, Lady Mayne, Mrs Montagu, Dr Porteus, and a few others, whose extensive circle of acquaintance might give them an opportunity of procuring a large number of subscriptions. A mode this, which, it was thought, could neither be construed into indelicacy towards him nor the public. The book did not make its appearance until the year 1776, as I shall have occasion to mention hereafter. But as the matter of the subscription became pretty generally known, and had been differently thought of by some of his friends, the inclosed letter to Lady Mayne* sets the matter in its proper point of view.

* The Honourable Frances Allen, daughter and co-heiress of Joshua Lord Viscount Allen, Lady of Sir William Mayne, Baronet, afterwards created Lord Newhaven, from both of whom Dr Beattie experienced the strongest marks of friendly and polite attention.

LETTER LXXXII.

DR BEATTIE TO LADY MAYNE.

Aberdeen, 2d January, 1774.

"OF my worthy and generous friend, Dr Majendie, I know not what to say. I must leave it to your ladyship to tell him, for no words of mine have energy enough, with what gratitude, affection and esteem, I do, and ever shall, remember him. The sentiments which his royal mistress * has been pleased to express, in regard to my affairs, do me the greatest honour; and I should be unworthy of them, if they did not give me the greatest pleasure. It is peculiarly fortunate, that her M——y should honour the subscription with her approbation. This may exclude, from a certain quarter, those misrepresentations of this affair, which, I have reason to think, are already circulating, very much to the prejudice of my character. I was, indeed, somewhat apprehensive, from the beginning, that my enemies might tax me with avarice and impudence. But your ladyship, and Mrs Montagu, concerted the scheme in such a manner, that, if it is rightly understood, it must redound, even in the judgment of my enemies themselves, still more to my honour, than it can be to my interest. And of this I lately endeavoured to satisfy a friend of mine in England, a gentleman eminent in the literary world, who, on hearing some imperfect account of a subscription, wrote me a letter, urging me in the most earnest manner, as I valued my character, to put a stop to it. I gave him, in return, as plain an account, as, without naming names, could be given, of the rise and progress of the affair. I told him, "That "it was a thing of a private nature entirely; projected, not by me, "but by some of my friends, who had condescended to charge "themselves with the whole trouble of it; that it was never meant "to be made public, nor put into the hands of booksellers, nor "carried on by solicitation, but was to be considered as a *voluntary* "mark of the approbation of some persons of rank and fortune,

See p. 179.

"who wished it to be known, that they patronised me on account "of what I had written in defence of truth; and that I was so far "from desiring to put the patience or generosity of my friends to "any further trial, that I had repeatedly protested, and did still "protest, that I was fully satisfied with the provision, which, by "his Majesty's bounty, I now enjoy, which was equal to my wishes, "and far superior, in my opinion, to my deservings." I told him further, "That considering the nature of this subscription, and the "high character of the persons who had proposed it, I could not "have refused my consent without giving myself airs, which would "have very ill become me:" and I added, "That while the subscrip-"tion, by remaining in suspense, was liable to be misunderstood, "I trusted to my friends for the vindication of my conduct; but "that, if ever the intended volume came to be published, I should "take care to do justice, in a preface, both to them, and to myself, "by stating the matter fairly to the public."—This information will, I hope, satisfy the gentleman, that the subscription is not, as he was made to believe, *disgraceful to my character*, (these are his words,) but, on the contrary, highly creditable to it, and honourable. However, that it may never be in the power, even of malice itself to lay any thing to my charge on this score, I would humbly propose, that no entreaty should be used to draw in subscribers, and that they, who make objections, should never be addressed a second time on the subject."

LETTER LXXXIII.

DR BEATTIE TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 8th January, 1774.

"SINCE I left London, Mr Hume's friends have been contriving a new method to blacken my character. I have been written to upon the subject, and desired to vindicate myself; as the utmost industry is used, even by some people of name, to circulate the malicious report.

"The charge against me, as stated in my correspondent's letter, is word for word as follows: I am accused of rancour, and ingratitude to Mr Hume; for, say they, "Mr Hume was very instru-

" mental in procuring for me the professorship I now hold at Aber-
" deen, and kept up a friendly correspondence with me for some time;
" till at length I sent him a poem of mine (which was never print-
" ed): but Mr Hume not liking it, and being frank in his nature,
" sent me word, it was as insipid as milk and water; upon which,
" bent on revenge, I immediately set about my " Essay on Truth,"
" which is full of virulence and misquotation."

" You may believe, that an accusation of this sort, in which, *you know*, I can prove, there is not one single word of truth, cannot give me much pain. But I should be glad, that Mr Hume, for his own sake, would disavow it; and indeed I cannot suppose, that he is so destitute of candour, as to give countenance to a report, which he himself certainly knows to be altogether false."

LETTER LXXXIV.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS TO DR BEATTIE.

London, 22d February, 1774.

" I SIT down to relieve my mind from great anxiety and uneasiness, and I am very serious when I say, that this proceeds from not answering your letter sooner. This seems very strange, you will say, since the cause may be so easily removed; but the truth of the matter is, I waited to be able to inform you that your picture was finished, which, however, I cannot now do. I must confess to you, that when I sat down, I did intend to tell a sort of a white lie, that it was finished: but on recollecting that I was writing to the author of truth, about a picture of truth, I felt that I ought to say nothing but truth. The truth then is, that the picture probably will be finished, before you receive this letter; for there is not above a day's work remaining to be done. Mr Hume has heard from somebody, that he is introduced in the picture, not much to his credit; there is only a figure covering his face with his hands, which they may call Hume, or any body else; it is true it has a tolerable broad back. As for Voltaire, I intended he should be one of the group.

" I intended to write more, but I hear the postman's bell. Dr Johnson, who is with me now, desires his compliments."

LETTER LXXXV.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 13th March, 1774.

"THE second book of the "Minstrel," (which Mr Fred. Montagu permits me to send under his cover) will be delivered to you, along with this; and I must give you the trouble to keep it till Mr Dilly calls for it. You were very indulgent to that part of it which you read last summer, in which I have made no very material alterations. I am impatient to know your opinion of the other part, and particularly of the conclusion, which I do not like the better for its being on a new plan, but to which I cannot help being partial, for the sake of the subject. You will see that the blank is to be filled up with the name of Gregory; a name which I forbear to write at length, till I see whether the public opinion will be so favourable, as to justify my taking that liberty with so dear and so respectable a friend. The lines relating to him were written (as I think I told you before) immediately after I received the melancholy news of his death; when my mind was oppressed with a weight of sorrow, which I did not, and which I needed not, attempt to exaggerate in the description. His friendship was for many years a never-failing source of consolation to me, in all my distresses; and he was taken from me at a time when my health was very bad, and my spirits in a most dejected condition. I had a letter from Mr Gregory, a few days ago, inclosing a copy of "The "Father's Legacy." I read it several years ago, in manuscript, and I then told the Doctor, that I looked upon it as the most elegant of all his compositions.

"You are right in conjecture, in regard to Dr ———. He had, it seems, heard some account of a subscription, and wrote of it to Mr ——— of ———, whose letter to me was in these words: "I take the liberty to trouble you with this line, merely to "mention a thing which my friend, Dr ———, out of pure good "will to you, advises me to mention. He writes me word, that he,

" hears, on good authority, a subscription has been set on foot, and " is soliciting, for your " Minstrel," (as well the new, as the old " part.) This way of publishing it, he thinks (and I heartily con- " cur with him) will be thought unworthy of your character, and " will certainly disgust your best friends. I take it for granted, if " the story is true, you have acquiesced in the thing, at the in- " stance of some friend, who did not feel that this method of pub- " lishing has so mean an appearance, as it really at present has. I " would, therefore, advise you, by all means to stop the progress of " the affair, as soon as possible; for I really think, it will be highly " disgraceful to a person of your confest abilities, if it proceeds, " &c." I returned Mr ——— an answer in course, and told him, that Dr ——— had been misinformed in regard to the "Minstrel," but that there actually was on foot a subscription of another sort, of which I gave him that account, which I afterwards sent to Lady Mayne, in that letter which you read. This happened about three months ago; and I have not heard from Mr ——— since; from which I know not whether to draw a favourable, or an unfavourable inference.

" Pray, madam, be so good as to favour me with some account of the Bishop of Carlisle, Dr Law, if he happens to be of your acquaintance. His Lordship (in a book lately published) has been pleased to attack me in a strange manner,* though in few words, and very superciliously seems to condemn my whole book; " be- " cause I believe in the identity of the human soul, and that there " are innate powers, and implanted instincts, in our nature." He hints, too, at my being a native of Scotland, and imputes my *unnatural way* of reasoning, (for so he characterises it) to my ignorance of what has been written on the other side of the question, by some late authors. It would be a very easy matter for me to return such an answer to his Lordship, as would satisfy the world, that he has been rather hasty in signing my condemnation; but perhaps it will be better to take no notice of it: I shall be determined by your advice. His doctrine is, that the human soul forfeited its immortality by the fall, but regained it in consequence of the merits of Jesus Christ, and that it cannot exist without the body; and must, there-

* Considerations on the Theory of Religion, by Edmund, Lord Bishop of Carlisle, p. 431.

fore, in the interval between death and the resurrection, remain in a state of non-existence. The theory is not a new one; but his Lordship seems to be one of the most sanguine of its adherents. Some of the objections, drawn from the scripture, he gets the better of by a mode of criticism, which, I humbly think, would not be admitted in a commentary upon any other book.

"I must now beg leave to put you in mind, that I have a claim on you, for an essay to my quarto volume; for I wish to have in it something new, that is really worth the money to be paid for it. I ground my claim upon a promise, which, I think, you were pleased to make me at Sandleford. Such a contribution will give you no trouble; and to me, considering how poorly provided I am for furnishing out a whole quarto, it will be an act of the greatest charity. The hope of it will be a spur to my industry; for, though it is impossible for me to provide for it suitable accommodation, I shall, however, bestir myself in decking and garnishing the rest of the volume for its reception. Since I have been in this state of confinement, I have amused myself in collecting materials for finishing an "Essay on Laughter," which I sketched out about ten years ago. I intend that it shall be one of my additional essays: it is a grave philosophical enquiry into the nature of those objects that provoke laughter, with critical remarks on the different sorts of ludicrous composition, and an attempt to account for the superiority of the moderns over the ancients, in the articles of wit and humour. I have written fifty pages, and shall have nearly as many more to write. When I have finished the first draught, I will have it transcribed, and sent to you.

LETTER LXXXVI.

LADY MAYNE TO DR BEATTIE.

St. James's Square, London, April 18th, 1774.

"I BELIEVE it is unnecessary to say, how much pleasure I have received, in reading over and over the second part of your delightful poem, which, I find, meets with the universal approbation it deserves; and all those, to whom you was so obliging as to

send copies, through me, join with Sir William and me, in a great many thanks, for so agreeable a present.

"Mr John Pitt, of Arlington-street, has desired me to make a proposal to you, which, whether it be agreeable to you or not, will be, I am sure, considered by you as a real proof of his friendship and esteem. It is, that in case you should have resolved to follow the advice of some of your friends, with regard to taking orders in our church; he has a living in his neighbourhood in Dorsetshire, likely to be very soon vacant, which he will not dispose of till he knows your mind. I believe Sir William and I know it pretty well, but as it did not become me to answer for you, I have only undertaken to obtain your own, which he begs may be as soon as possible, because he has a number of applications for it, though the yearly value is only a hundred and fifty pounds. You will, I dare say, judge it proper to write to him yourself upon the occasion.

"He is a man of most uncommon goodness of heart; he and his charming wife are well-deserving of each other. They both, in the beginning of this winter, proposed a plan, for a society of well-disposed persons, to raise a fund by voluntary subscription, for the relief of distressed and deserving objects. The society soon became very numerous, as well as rich, and consists of several of the highest rank, and most eminent virtue, besides others who wish to imitate such good examples.

"Some very honest judicious people are kept in pay, to enquire and examine strictly into the true state of all such objects as send in petitions, and a committee of thirty meet every Saturday morning, to consider the reports of these enquirers, and to order suitable relief; besides which, the whole body of subscribers, to the amount of five guineas and upwards, have a general meeting every Wednesday evening, to form general rules and regulations, and consult upon any extraordinary cases that may offer. Besides this committee, there is another chosen, consisting of six ladies, and a seventh called the treasurer, whose department it is to employ poor women in work, who are industrious, but deprived of employment. I dare say it will immediately strike you, that such an unlimited plan must soon become impracticable, in such a town as this is, from the infinity of business that would multiply daily: and so it has proved. We therefore, about a month ago, found ourselves obliged to confine ourselves to the residents in five

parishes; St James's, St George's, St Ann's, St Martin's, and Marybone. This gave a little relief for some time, but now, as might well be expected, the poor are all establishing themselves within these limits, so that, I greatly fear, this most excellent scheme cannot hold out long, at least upon its present footing. However, the zeal that the greatest number of the subscribers manifest, and the indefatigable pains, as well as time, that they employ this way, in spite of all the allurements of pleasure and dissipation that surround them, make me hope, that experience will open the way to some effectual and durable method of doing all the good they wish, both in the way of relief and detection. Lady Charlotte Finch, and her two daughters, her sister, Lady Juliana Penn, Lady Spencer, Lady Erskine, Lord and Lady Dartree, Lady Dartmouth, your friend Mr Hawkins Browne, the Dutchess of Northumberland, Lord and Lady Willoughby, Miss Cooper, Miss Proby, Mrs Eliz. Carter, and a very great number besides, give up the greatest part of their time and thoughts to this business, to such a degree, that some have suffered in their health by it.

"Who would have expected, some time ago, to be so edified in the year 1774, in contemplating the occupations of one of the first and most numerous societies in the environs of St James's? I know this will give double satisfaction to you, as it tends to confirm your system of *innate* goodness, for I am sure the greatest part of this society did not acquire theirs, either by prejudice of education, or by the London habits, in which they were early initiated. I dare say it would give you the greatest satisfaction to attend at any of these weekly meetings, where you would see so many amiable people, attentive, for several hours together, to the sole purpose of trying to alleviate the distresses of their fellow-creatures."

LETTER LXXXVII.

DR BEATTIE TO LADY MAYNE.

Aberdeen, 20th May, 1774.

"I HAVE enclosed an answer to Mr John Pitt's very kind offer, which you will be so good as to forward. I thank him for

his generosity, of which, indeed, I have a very affecting sense: but I tell him, that, by the advice of my best friends, I have given up all thoughts of entering into the church, many months ago.

"I am much obliged to you, madam, for your agreeable account of the charitable society, lately established in the neighbourhood of St James's. It is, as you observe, an honour to my theory of virtue: but, what gives me much more pleasure, (theorist as I am) it does honour also to the virtue and good sense of the age, it does honour to human nature. I do not know any thing more desirable, nor more difficult, than to lay down, and carry into execution, a proper plan for the relief of the poor, which, without encouraging idleness or vice, shall administer real comfort to the helpless and the needy. The provision, established by your poor's rate in England, is indeed very ample, nay, in some places so exorbitant, that I should think nothing could flourish in those places, but poverty. I have heard of eight, ten, nay, even fourteen shillings in the pound, paid, in some parishes, to the poor's rate, which, added to the land-tax, would seem to make the land-holder the poorest man in the district. There must be some grievous mismanagement, both in the exaction and application of such sums; and it were most devoutly to be wished, that the legislature would endeavour to provide a remedy for so enormous an evil. Till this be done, all that individuals can in prudence do, is to enquire into, and relieve the necessities of those poor, who live in their neighbourhood, and with whose circumstances they are well acquainted, either from personal knowledge, or undoubted information. Were this done in all parts of the kingdom, the poor would be better supplied than by any legal provision, how great soever; and begging, as a trade, would be at an end; and nothing can be more praise-worthy, than for persons of rank and fortune to set the example of so benevolent an institution.

"A prince of Liege, in order to cancel all at once the wrong side of his spiritual account, bequeathed, on his death-bed, his whole fortune, which was very large, to the poor, appointing the magistrates of Liege his administrators. The consequence is, that of all the beggars and vagabonds in the Netherlands, Liege is now the common receptacle. It is no uncommon thing for an army of five or six thousand of these people to invest the house of the chief magistrate, and threaten to extirpate him, and all his

generation, with fire and sword, if he does not instantly make a pecuniary distribution. The gentleman from whom I have this account, and who is a person of sense and veracity, resided some time in Liege, and, to give an idea of the multitude of beggars that swarm in the streets of that town, told me further, that one day, in walking half a mile, he gave away, to professed beggars, not less than fifty-eight pieces of money. I need not tell your Ladyship what inferences are to be drawn from this story."

LETTER LXXXVIII.*

MRS MONTAGU TO DR BEATTIE.

Sandleford, 21st June, 1773.

"MY health is greatly improved since I came hither, and I shall be able to enjoy the pleasure of the Dutchess of Portland's conversation, and the charms of Bulstrode. I had the honour and happiness of passing many of my youthful days in that society, and that place; so that I feel a more tender and sincere joy when I return to it, than I find any where else. The Dutchess does honour to her sex, and to her rank; peculiar purity and dignity have distinguished her through every stage of life. Her example, as a daughter, a wife, a mother, have not been excelled by any one; as a lady of the highest birth, rank, and fortune, it has not been equalled. Her humility, benevolence, and generosity, give an amiableness to her whole conduct, and make every one round her happy.

"I long to see you here. I had yesterday thirty-six haymakers, and their children, at dinner, in a grove in the garden. When they work in my sight, I love to see that they eat as well as labour, and often send them a treat, to which they bring an appetite that gives a better relish than the Madeira wine, and Cayenne pepper, in which the alderman stews his turtle. You would have enjoyed the sight of this feast: to which temperance was steward, frugality cook, and hunger the guest."

* The following seven letters ought to have been inserted at their proper dates. I prefer giving them in this manner to the reader, rather than withhold them altogether.

LETTER LXXXIX.

MRS MONTAGU TO DR BEATTIE.

August 23d, 1773.

"WHILE my imagination was delighting itself, in painting you in all the florid colours, and utmost glow of prosperity and joy, you were, in fact, languishing on a sick bed! What a poor "limitary cherub"* is our "divine Alma!" ignorant of all things that do not pass in her presence, and often deceived in those that do! I flatter myself, that the fresh air, and tranquillity of this place, will soon restore your strength and spirits.

"I am delighted with Sir Joshua Reynolds' plan, and do not doubt but he will make a very noble picture of it. I class Sir Joshua with the greatest geniuses that have ever appeared in the art of painting; and I wish he was employed by the public, in some great work, that would do honour to our country in future ages. He has the spirit of a Grecian artist. The Athenians did not employ such men in painting portraits to place over a chimney, or the door of a private cabinet. I long to see the picture he is now designing; virtue and truth are subjects worthy of the artist and the man. He has an excellent moral character, and is most pleasing and amiable in society; and, with great talents, has uncommon humility and gentleness."

LETTER XC.

REV. DR MAJENDIE TO DR BEATTIE.

Kew-Green, October 19th, 1773.

"AS soon as your favour of the 10th September last, and the copies attending it, reached me here, I failed not immediately to make use of the whole, as it had been agreed upon between us.

* Milton.

The two copies of your "Minstrel" were most graciously received by their Majesties, and your letter of the above date read through by both with apparent satisfaction: and no wonder, as a vein of propriety, good sense, and manly gratitude, is so conspicuous in every part of it. May you, good sir, long enjoy the pleasure arising from such feelings, and ever have the additional one, of disseminating them all around you. This I know to be your fixed purpose; a nobler one you cannot have in view. May every circumstance in life concur to crown it with success.

"Your "Minstrel" (for a very neat copy of which I have now to thank you) I have read with much satisfaction. As far as I am able to judge of this kind of composition, it seems adequate to the subject; the verse flowing easily, and unaffectedly; the sentiments of the young hero of the piece, such as unvitiated nature suggests; and your descriptions, in many places, truly poetical and sublime. Your stanzas XL, and XLI, are happily brought in, well executed. So deserved a stricture upon the grovelling Pyrrhonians, and Epicureans, is worthy of the author of the "Essay "on Truth." Pray go on with a subject you have so successfully begun. Let us soon see the good, the innocent, the guiltless Edwin (no more your own, since the time you have been pleased to show him to the public) proceeding through life as he has commenced it. Nothing can be a bar to his merits and happiness in the world, provided, *Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.* You, sir, have fostered him into the world. How can he miscarry, under so able a Mentor?"

LETTER XCI.

MRS MONTAGU TO DR BEATTIE.

Sandleford, 31st October, 1773.

"I HAVE just begun a posthumous work of the famous Helvetius (who wrote a book called "L'esprit," some years ago): It is astonishing to see how the understandings and language of the

French are corrupted, since the time of Louis XIV. I am particularly provoked at one practice of theirs, which is, whenever they repeat an old, and long acknowledged truth, they endeavour to put it off as their own observation and discovery; and every *novel* fallacy, the offspring of their own brain, they introduce as a known and demonstrated argument, verified by experience. What a cheat should we account a shop-keeper, who put the sterling mark on his pewter, and having in his warehouse only three or four silver spoons and salts, omitted to mark them with the true indication of their value, and how surprised would the customer be, when he found he had prized most highly the baser metal!"

LETTER XCII.

MRS MONTAGU TO DR BEATTIE.

London, 4th April, 1774.

"I HAVE for six different mornings intended writing to you, and as often have been disappointed, by persons, who, with very polite intentions of making me civil visits, robbed me of the hours I had destined to a more pleasing purpose. With great satisfaction I consigned your charming "Minstrel" to Mr Dilly; it will soon come abroad, and, I have no doubt, meet with the highest approbation. You have added many fine stanzas since I saw it, and I like much the conclusion, though it does not belong to the subject. However, it is the sweetest office of the Minstrel, to sing the praise of a dear departed friend. A prose panegyric, like the the cypress tree, does but with *lugubre* state shade the tomb: the Parnassian *Bay* adorns it, and gives it a sanctity, and throws the lustre of immortality around it. I read with new pleasure, and new wonder, (and wonder is rarely repeated) the felicity with which you have given the sweetest graces of poetry to the severest and gravest subjects. It does not surprise me to see garlands of roses bloom on the brow of youth, beauty and pleasure; but to see them so gracefully adorn the hoary head of the legislator, and the pensive brow of the philosopher, shews the consummate address of the artist."

LETTER XCIII.

MRS MONTAGU TO DR BEATTIE.

April 30th, 1774.

"I AM ashamed that I have not conveyed to you the fame of your "Minstrel," which comes in the sweetest and the loudest notes to my ear every day. Indeed it is surprising to find Edwin preserve his simplicity, his harmony, and his poetical imagination, in the school of philosophy, and in the din of society. The stanzas, dedicated to the memory of your friend, have drawn tears and sighs from all who have lost a friend, or have one to lose; it is on insensibility alone that it does not make deep impression.

"I have not time to enter into any discussion of Dr Bryant's Analysis of Ancient Mythology, Mr Warton's History of Poetry, and Lord Chesterfield's Letters, all which I have been reading. I must tell you, that Samuel Johnson says of Lord Chesterfield's Instructions to his Son, that they are to teach the manners of a dancing-master, with the morals of a prostitute. The sentence is too severe, to be perfectly just, and the character too short, to be perfectly descriptive; but there is something too near truth, and too like description. One grieves that Lord Chesterfield's judgment and talent should have been misapplied in the important matter of forming a son's character; but more of this at our better leisure. Your portrait is in the exhibition; it is very like, and the piece worthy the pencil of Sir Joshua.

LETTER XCIV.

REV. DR MAJENDIE TO DR BEATTIE.

Windsor, April 26th, 1774.

"IT is with much pleasure, that I come now, though later than I could have wished, to give you an account of the reception your second book of the "Minstrel" has met with. Dilly having given

me notice that it was printed, and would be shortly published, I desired that he would use the utmost dispatch, that very day, which was last Tuesday, to get me two copies, as elegantly bound as so short a notice would permit, that I might be able to present them to their Majesties early next morning; as else the opportunity would be lost, I being obliged to be absent for three weeks. This request was accordingly complied with, and the books were presented to their Majesties, at a time they were both together. To a heart like yours, my dear sir, it must be no small satisfaction to be informed, that they were received with that same goodness, and affable condescension, which you experienced last summer. Some observations were made upon your character and writings, that shewed how well they are able to appreciate men and things; and I was particularly ordered by the Queen, to let you know, that she truly values you.

"Having thus given you an account of my commission, I should be wanting both to you and myself, if I omit returning you thanks for your kind attention, in ordering me a copy of your second book of the "Minstrel," which I have read with the greatest satisfaction, and lent it to others here, who entertain the same notion of its moral and poetical merit, as I do. May you long continue to be an ornament, a blessing to human nature, and to the age you live in!

"Transferred from a Prebend of Worcester, to a Canonry here, by his Majesty's great goodness, I am now keeping my strict residence. I have brought down with me the last edition of your Essay, &c. and given it a second reading. The whole pleases me more and more. I have been particularly delighted with the 2d Chapter of Part III. The critical account you there give of Aristotle's Works, &c. the fate of metaphysic from his time down to ours; the crafty and unfair method of our late sceptics handling the subjects they undertake to write upon, which you have so fairly laid open; and the manly warmth with which you refute them; form together a masterpiece, by itself. It is such a one, in my humble opinion, as deserves the thanks, not only of the literati, but of all honest and good men. I am glad to hear, that the subscription to the quarto edition is likely to turn to account. I have not been wanting, on my part, to promote it, as far as my little power and influence could reach. To Lady Mayne, and Mrs Montagu,

you are greatly obliged on this occasion, there is no doubt of it. However, to your merit, as a champion in the cause of truth, is chiefly owing the success it met with; which gives me so much the more pleasure, as it affords a proof, that the age we live in, though bad, hath sense enough to know, where rewards and encouragements are due, and readiness to bestow them accordingly."

LETTER XCV.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 3d May, 1774.

"I AM greatly obliged and honoured by what the hierarchy have done, and are doing for me. Of Dr Law's attack I shall take no further notice.*

"I received a letter, two days ago, from Dr Hurd.† It is a very kind letter, and much in praise of the "Minstrel." Lord Chesterfield's letters, he says, are well calculated for the purpose of teaching "manners without morals" to our young people of quality. This opinion I had indeed begun to form concerning them, from some short extracts in the news-papers. In one of these extracts I was greatly surprised to see such a pompous encomium on Bolinbroke's *Patriot King*; which has always appeared to me a mere *vox et præterea nihil*. Plato was one of the first who introduced the fashion of giving us fine words instead of good sense; in this, as in his other faults, he has been successfully imitated by Shaftesbury; but I know not whether he, or any other author, has ever put together so many words, with so little meaning, as Bolinbroke, in his papers on patriotism.

"Lord Monboddo's second volume has been published some time. It is, I think, much better than the first, and contains much learning, and not a little ingenuity: but can never be very interesting, except to those who aim at a grammatical and critical knowledge of the Greek tongue. Lord Kaimes's Sketches I have seen.

* See p. 228. † Now Lord Bishop of Worcester.

They are not much different from what I expected. A man, who reads thirty years, with a view to collect facts, in support of two or three whimsical theories, may, no doubt, collect a great number of facts, and make a very large book. The world will wonder when they hear of a modern philosopher, who seriously denies the existence of such a principle as universal benevolence;—a point, of which no good man can entertain a doubt for a single moment.

"I am sorry for poor Goldsmith. There were some things in his temper which I did not like; but I liked many things in his genius; and I was sorry to find, last summer, that he looked upon me as a person who seemed to stand between him and his interest. However, when next we meet, all this will be forgotten; and the jealousy of authors, which, Dr Gregory used to say, was next in rancour to that of physicians, will be no more.

"I am glad that you are pleased with the additional stanzas of the second canto of the "Minstrel;" but I fear you are too indulgent. How it will be relished by the public, I cannot even guess. I know all its faults; but I cannot remedy them, for they are faults in the first concoction; they result from the imperfection of the plan. I am much obliged to you, madam, for advising that two copies should be presented to their Majesties, which, Dilly writes me word, has been done by my good friend, Dr Majendie. This honour I meant to have solicited, when the second edition came out, which will be soon. My reason for this delay was, that the first edition having been put to the press, and some sheets of it printed off before I knew, I had it not in my power to order any copies on fine paper. But it is better as it is; the paper of the copy I have, is not at all amiss.

"My "Essay on Laughter" advances but slowly. I have all my materials at hand; but my health obliges me to labour very moderately in reducing them into order. I am very unwilling to relinquish the hope of receiving from you, madam, some assistance in completing my volume. I beg you will think of it. Perhaps you may find more leisure when you come into the north.

"Mr Mason has never answered the letter I wrote to him, concerning the subscription. I guessed from the tenor of his letters, that he is, (as you say) out of humour with the world. Mr Dilly writes me word, that he says he is tempted to throw his *Life of Mr Gray* (which is now finished, or nearly so) into the fire, so much is

he dissatisfied with the late decision on literary property. By the way, I heartily wish the legislature may, by a new law, set this matter on a proper footing. Literature must suffer, if this decision remains unobviated."

LETTER XCVI.

DR BEATTIE TO DR BLACKLOCK.

Aberdeen, 23d May, 1774.

"IF the second part of the "Minstrel" has contributed for one half hour to your amusement, it has in some measure answered the end for which it was written. It was much more laborious, than the first part, in the composing: but I question whether it will be so popular. The public taste requires, and justly too, more fable, than my plan will allow me to put into it; for fable is to poetry, what bones are to the human body, or timbers and rafters to a building. But my purpose, from the beginning, was to make a didactic or philosophical, rather than a narrative poem: and the title unluckily gives the reader reason to expect more story, than I can, without the greatest inconveniency, afford. However, I hope the piece will receive the encouragement which it may really deserve; as yet, I have no reason to complain; for a second edition of the second part was called for, within a week after the publication."

LETTER XCVII.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 27th May, 1774.

"I AM much diverted by Johnson's character of Lord Chesterfield's Letters. Dr Hurd and Mr Mason (for I have heard from them both, since the second part of the "Minstrel" came out) give nearly the same account of them.

"Mr Mason seems now to be tolerably reconciled to the subscription; but he has found a new subject of concern, in this allegorical picture, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, which, he thinks, can hardly fail to hurt my character in good earnest. I know not certainly, in what light Mr Mason considers this picture; but, so far as I have yet heard, he is singular in his opinion. If Mr Gray had done me the honour to address an ode to me, and speak in high terms of my attack on the sceptics, my enemies might have blamed him for his partiality, and the world might have thought that he had employed his muse in too mean an office; but would any body have blamed me? If Sir Joshua Reynolds thinks more favourably of me than I deserve, (which he certainly does) and if he entertains the same favourable sentiments of my cause, which I wish him, and all the world to entertain; I should be glad to know from Mr Mason, what there is in all this, to fix any blame on *my* character? Indeed, if *I* had planned this picture, and urged Sir Joshua to paint it, and paid him for his trouble, and then have solicited admittance for it into the exhibition, the world would have had good reason to exclaim against me, as a vain coxcomb; but I am persuaded, that nobody will ever suspect me of this: for nobody can do so, without first supposing that I am a fool.

"About three weeks ago, I received a very short letter from Dr Priestley, of which the following is a copy: "Reverend Sir, "Thinking it right that every person should be apprised of any "publication in which his writings are animadverted upon, I take "the liberty to send you a copy of a sheet, that will soon be pub- "lished, in which I announce my intention to remark upon the "principles of your 'Essay on Truth'. I am, reverend sir, your "very humble servant, J. Priestley." This sheet contains a preface to a third vol. of "Institutes of Religion." That you, madam, may be the better enabled to judge between him and me, I send it to you in a separate packet, which will be delivered along with this.

"I never saw Dr Priestley; I greatly esteem his talents as a natural philosopher, particularly as a chemist: whether his talents in moral philosophy be as distinguished, I have no opportunity of knowing. His excessive admiration of Mr Hartley's book, (see the preface, page 21.) I have heard mentioned as one of the learned Doctor's hobby-horses. I am not ignorant of his connections in

the way of party; but I hope, in this attack upon my book, he is determined by nothing but a love of truth. I need not tell you, that he is the oracle of the Socinians and Dissenters; and the public will no doubt expect, that I should answer his preface. This will not be a difficult matter. The Doctor must certainly have read my book, since he declares, in print, his disapprobation of it; but that he has read it attentively, and without prejudice, is not clear. Certain it is, that every one of his remarks on me, as they appear in this preface, is founded in a gross misapprehension of my doctrine. I have written him a letter, which I enclose in this packet for your perusal; if you approve of it, please to cause it be forwarded to him; if not, you may suppress it.

"One would think, from reading Dr Priestley's preface, that Dr Reid, Dr Oswald, and I, wrote in concert, and with a view to enforce the very same hypothesis. But the truth is, that I write in concert with nobody: Dr Oswald's book I never read, till after my own was published: and Dr Reid (to whom I have made all due acknowledgments for the instruction I have received from his work) never saw mine till it was in the hands of the public. The controversial part of Dr Reid's book regards the existence of matter chiefly; Dr Oswald's system (though there are many good things in his book) I never distinctly understood. The former of these authors differs in many things from me; and the latter (if I am rightly informed) has actually attacked a fundamental principle of mine, in a second volume, lately published, which I have not yet got leisure to read."

I have already observed, that among various plans suggested by Dr Beattie's friends in England, for the advancement of his fortune, that of his taking orders in the Church of England had been mentioned to him.* It has been seen, by the preceding correspondence with Lady Mayne, and Mr John Pitt, that he had entirely abandoned that idea. The zeal of his friends, however, was not abated, and he received another very flattering proposition, to the same purpose, through the hands of Dr Porteus.

* See p. 177.

LETTER XCVIII.

THE REV. DR PORTEUS TO DR BEATTIE.

Hunton, near Maidstone, Kent, July 24th, 1774.

"I AM desired, by one of the Episcopal bench, whose name I am not yet at liberty to mention, to ask you, whether you have any objections to taking orders in the Church of England. If you have not, there is a living now vacant in his gift, worth near five hundred pounds a-year, which will be at your service.

"Be pleased to send me your answer to this, as soon as possible, and direct it to me at Peterborough, in Northamptonshire, where I shall probably be, before your letter can reach me. I feel myself happy, in being the instrument of communicating to you so honourable and advantageous a proof of that esteem, which your literary labours have secured to you, amongst all ranks of people."

To this proposition, so very flattering, as well as advantageous, Dr Beattie gave the following admirable reply, which does the highest credit to the purity of his principles, and the integrity of his mind.

LETTER XCIX.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. DR PORTEUS.

Peterhead, 4th August, 1774.

"I HAVE made many efforts to express, in something like adequate language, my grateful sense of the honour done me by the Right Reverend Prelate, who makes the offer conveyed to me in your most friendly letter of the 24th July. But every new effort

serves only to convince me, more and more, how unequal I am to the task.

"When I consider the extraordinary reception which my weak endeavours in the cause of truth have met with, and compare the greatness of my success, with the insignificance of my merit, what reasons have I not to be thankful and humble! to be ashamed that I have done so little public service, and to regret that so little *is in my power!* to rouse every power of my nature to purposes of benevolent tendency, in order to justify, by my intentions at least, the unexampled generosity of my benefactors!

"My religious opinions would no doubt, if I were to declare them, sufficiently account for, and vindicate, my becoming a member of the Church of England; and I flatter myself, that my studies, way of life, and habits of thinking, have always been such, as would not disqualify me for an Ecclesiastical profession. If I were to become a clergyman, the Church of England would certainly be my choice; as I think, that, in regard to church-government, and church-service, it has many great and peculiar advantages. And I am so far from having any natural disinclination to holy orders, that I have several times, at different periods of my life, been disposed to enter into them, and have directed my studies accordingly. Various accidents, however, prevented me; some of them pretty remarkable, and such as I think I might, without presumption, ascribe to a particular interposition of providence.

"The offer, now made me, is great and generous beyond all expectation. I am well aware of all the advantages and honours that would attend my accepting, and yet, I find myself obliged, in conscience, to decline it; as I lately did another of the same kind (though not so considerable) that was made me, on the part of another English gentleman.* The reasons which did then, and do now, determine me, I beg leave, sir, briefly to lay before you.

"I wrote the "Essay on Truth," with the certain prospect of raising many enemies, with very faint hopes of attracting the public attention, and without any views of advancing my fortune. I published it, however, because I thought it might probably do a little good, by bringing to nought, or at least lessening the reputa-

* See his letter to Lady Mayne, p. 230.

tion of, that wretched system of sceptical philosophy, which had made a most alarming progress, and done incredible mischief to this country. My enemies have been at great pains to represent my views, in that publication, as very different: and that my principal, or only motive was, to make a book, and, if possible, to raise myself higher in the world. So that, if I were now to accept preferment in the church, I should be apprehensive, that I might strengthen the hands of the gainsayer, and give the world some ground to believe, that my love of truth was not quite so ardent, or so pure, as I had pretended.

"Besides, might it not have the appearance of levity and insincerity, and, by some, be construed into a want of principle, if I were at these years, (for I am now thirty-eight) to make such an important change in my way of life, and to quit, with no other *apparent* motive than that of bettering my circumstances, that church of which I have hitherto been a member? If my book has any tendency to do good, as I flatter myself it has, I would not, for the wealth of the Indies, do any thing to counteract that tendency; and I am afraid, that tendency might in some measure be counteracted, (at least in this country) if I were to give the adversary the least ground to charge me with inconsistency. It is true, that the force of my reasonings cannot be *really* affected by my character; truth is truth, whoever be the speaker: but even truth itself becomes less respectable, when spoken, or supposed to be spoken, by insincere lips.

"It has also been hinted to me, by several persons of very sound judgment, that what I have written, or may hereafter write, in favour of religion, has a chance of being more attended to, if I continue a layman, than if I were to become a clergyman. Nor am I without apprehensions, (though some of my friends think them ill-founded) that, from entering so late in life, and from so remote a province into the Church of England, some degree of ungracefulness, particularly in pronunciation, might adhere to my performances in public, sufficient to render them less pleasing, and consequently less useful.

"Most of these reasons were repeatedly urged upon me, during my stay in England, last summer; and I freely own, that, the more I consider them, the more weight they seem to have. And from the peculiar manner in which the King has been graciously

pleased to distinguish me, and from other circumstances, I have some ground to presume, that it is his Majesty's pleasure, that I should continue where I am, and employ my leisure hours in prosecuting the studies I have begun. This I can find time to do more effectually in Scotland than in England, and in Aberdeen than in Edinburgh; which, by the bye, was one of my chief reasons for declining the Edinburgh professorship. The business of my professorship here is indeed toilsome: but I have, by fourteen years practice, made myself so much master of it, that it now requires little mental labour; and our long summer vacation, of seven months, leaves me at my own disposal, for the greatest and best part of the year: a situation favourable to literary projects, and now become necessary to my health.

"Soon after my return home, in autumn last, I had occasion to write to the Archbishop of York, on this subject. I specified my reasons for giving up all thoughts of church-preferment; and his Grace was pleased to approve of them; nay, he condescended so far as to say, they did me honour. I told his Grace, moreover, that I had already given a great deal of trouble to my noble and generous patrons in England, and could not think of being any longer a burden to them, now that his Majesty had so graciously and so generously made for me a provision equal to my wishes, and such as puts it in my power to obtain, in Scotland, every convenience of life, to which I have any title, or any inclination to aspire.

"I must, therefore, make it my request to you, that you would present my humble respects, and most thankful acknowledgments, to the eminent person, at whose desire you wrote your last letter, (whose name I hope you will not be under the necessity of concealing from me) and assure him, that, though I have taken the liberty to decline his generous offer, I shall, to the last hour of my life, preserve a most grateful remembrance of the honour he has condescended to confer upon me; and, to prove myself not altogether unworthy of his goodness, shall employ that health and leisure which providence may hereafter afford me, in opposing infidelity, heresy, and error, and in promoting sound literature, and christian truth, to the utmost of my power."

Although secrecy was thus enjoined, at the period when the correspondence respecting the living took place, yet it is right, that the name of the right reverend prelate, who made this most generous offer to Dr Beattie, should not be longer concealed, now that both are dead. Dr Thomas, at that time Bishop of Winchester, was the person, whose letter to Dr Porteus I now subjoin.

LETTER C.

THE RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER TO THE REV. DR PORTEUS.

Farnham-Castle, 24th July, 1774.

"IT is now, I think, three weeks ago since I wrote to you. I then suggested a conversation that passed between us at Chelsea, relating to Dr Beattie, and my disposition to shew him some mark of my esteem and good-will.

"I have a living now vacant, of five hundred pounds a-year, in Hants, and I wish that you would sound him, with secrecy, upon the subject, and let me have a line from you, as soon as you can. The living has been vacant a month; and I shall have no rest till I can dispose of it."

The transactions which I have here related respecting the Edinburgh professorship, and the church-preferment offered to him in England, form a somewhat remarkable period in the life of Dr Beattie, as they evinced the fixed resolution he had taken, and from which he did not deviate, of continuing, during the remainder of his days, at Aberdeen. We find him, indeed, paying occasional visits to Edinburgh and London, during the summer months of the college-vacation. But these visits seem to have had no other object than his amusement, and the enjoying occasionally the society of his numerous friends, at both places. He was, likewise, constant

in his visits, every summer, to Peterhead,* a place to which he was strongly attached, and in which, as well as in the society of some friends there, he much delighted. He thought the air of the place particularly healthy and useful to his constitution: "and I have "often," says a friend, who gave me this information, "seen him "stand for a long time, on the adjoining promontory, inhaling, in a "fine day, the pure air from the ocean, and enjoying the majestic "prospect, expressing great delight in both." He had great confidence, too, in the tonic powers of the mineral spring, and of the salt-water baths; and his hope of being able to go through his professional duties with comfort, during the winter, was in exact proportion to the length of time he had been able to spend at Peterhead, the preceding summer.

Nor was it on account of the waters, the baths, and the healthful air alone, that he was so greatly attached to Peterhead. He loved the people, and they loved and respected him; and there were several of the venerable old inhabitants of the place, for whose integrity and simplicity of character he entertained, and was often heard to express, a high regard. Although he by no means shunned the society of the numerous strangers, who flock to Peterhead in the course of the season, and sometimes dined with them, at their common table, yet he spent much of his time alone, in study, or in the society of a few select friends. During the fine weather, he dedicated many hours to his favourite and healthful amusement of walking in the fields, or along the sea-shore; and he used pleasantly to say, that there was not a road, nor a foot-path, not a rock, nor any

* Peterhead, a small town in the county of Aberdeen, situated on the most easterly promontory of Scotland; famous for a Chalybeate spring of the nature of the waters of Tunbridge-wells, and for salt-water baths of admirable construction, which draw thither a considerable resort of fashionable company, during the summer season, some in search of health, and others of amusement. But it is chiefly to the industry, the sobriety, and prudence of the inhabitants, that Peterhead, from being merely an insignificant fishing town, owes its rapid encrease in commerce, manufactures, and consequent population; so that from two thousand, four hundred, and twenty souls, to which number only the inhabitants amounted, so lately as the year 1764, the town is said to have contained no fewer than four thousand, one hundred, in the year 1794, and is daily encreasing.†

† Statistical Account of Scotland, Parish of Peterhead, Vol. XVI. p. vii. and p. 561.

remarkable stone in the neighbourhood of Peterhead, with which he was not *personally* acquainted.

One of the chief employments, and, indeed, amusements of his leisure hours, at this period, was the conducting, and superintending the education of his eldest son, whom he placed, first, at the usual public shools at Aberdeen, and, afterwards, at the Marischal college in that city. There, the youth's proficiency in the various branches of classical learning and philosophy, was uncommonly great. He inherited, no doubt, by nature, an acute genius, which he cultivated by incessant and laborious application. But it cannot be questioned, that much of the uncommon progress which he made in the various branches of science, to which he applied himself, must have been owing to the incalculable advantages which he derived from the taste, the learning, and the unremitting attention of so able a preceptor as his father. Of young Beattie, I shall have ample occasion to speak hereafter.

In Dr Beattie's letters to Mrs Montagu, 27th May, 1774, he had mentioned his having received a letter from Dr Priestley, intimating his intention of animadverting on the "Essay on Truth." In the following letter Dr Beattie takes farther notice of this subject.

LETTER CI.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Peterhead, 5th August, 1774.

"DR PRIESTLEY's Preface is come out, without any acknowledgment of the information conveyed to him in my letter. But he has written to me on the occasion, and says, he will publish my letter in that book which he is preparing, in opposition to the "Essay on Truth," as he thinks such a letter will do me honour. He praises the candour and generosity which, he says, appear in my letter, and seems to be satisfied, that I wrote my book with a good intention; which is the only merit he allows me, at least he mentions no other. He blames me exceedingly for my want of

moderation, and for speaking, as I have done, of the *moral influence* of opinions. He owns, that his notions, on some of the points in which he differs from me, are exceedingly unpopular, and likely to continue so, and says, that perhaps no two persons, professing christianity, ever thought more differently, than he and I do. It is a loss to me, he seems to think, that I have never been acquainted with such persons, as himself, and his friends, in England: to this he is inclined to impute the improper style I have made use of on some subjects; but he hopes a little reflection, and a candid examination of what he is to write against me, will bring me to a better way of thinking and speaking. His motive for entering the lists with me, is no other, he says, than "a sincere and pretty strong, "though perhaps a mistaken regard to truth." This is the substance of his letter, as I understand it. There are indeed some things in it, which I do not distinctly understand; and therefore, I believe, I shall not at present make any reply. He does not tell me, what the points of difference between us are: but I find from some reports, that have penetrated even to this remote corner, that he has taken some pains to let it be known, that he is writing an answer to my book. A volume of his "Institutes of Religion" lately fell into my hand, which is the first of his theological works I have seen; and, I must confess, it does not give me any high opinion of him. His notions of christianity are indeed different from mine; so very different, that I know not whether I should think it necessary or proper to assume the title of a christian, if I were to think and write as he does. When one proceeds so far, as to admit some parts of the Gospel History, and reject others; as to suppose, that some of the facts, recorded by the Evangelists of our Saviour, may reasonably be disbelieved, and others doubted; when one, I say, has proceeded thus far, we may without breach of charity conclude, that he has within him a spirit of paradox and presumption, which may prompt him to proceed much further. Dr Priestley's doctrines seem to me to strike at the very vitals of Christianity. His success in some of the branches of natural knowledge seems to have intoxicated him, and led him to fancy, that he was master of every subject, and had a right to be a dictator in all: for in this book of his, there is often a boldness of assertion, followed by a weakness of argument, which no man of parts would adventure upon, who did not think that his word would be taken for a law.

I am impatient for the appearance of his book against me; as I cannot prepare matters for a new edition of the "Essay on Truth," till I see what he has to say against it.

"I have not seen Dr Gerard's "Essay on Genius." I know the author very well, for I studied philosophy under him; he is a man of great worth, learning, and good sense. His "Essay on "Taste" (which you have probably seen) was well received; and I am confident, there will be many good things in this new work, notwithstanding the unpromising and hackneyed title."

In the course of the year 1774, Dr Priestley published his promised work, by the title of "An Examination of Dr Reid's In-"quiry into the Human Mind, on the Principles of Common "Sense; of Dr Beattie's Essay on the Nature and Immutability of "Truth; and of Dr Oswald's Appeal to Common Sense, in behalf "of Religion;" in which he has violently attacked the doctrines of these philosophers.

To each of them Dr Priestley had sent a letter, containing a sheet of his introduction, and announcing his intention of animadverting on their works. To that letter, as has been seen, Dr Beattie had written an answer, in which he had stated certain positions, which, if Dr Priestley attributed to him, Dr Beattie insisted, were no where to be found, either expressed, or implied, in any part of his works. This letter, Dr Priestley has very candidly inserted, in an appendix to his "Examination."

Although Dr Priestley treats these three eminent authors with great contempt, yet he speaks of Dr Beattie with most moderation. He believes, he says, that Dr Beattie wrote his "Essay on the "Nature and Immutability of Truth," with the very best intention in the world. And that it was nothing but his zeal in the most excellent cause, that of religion, which betrayed him into rash censures, and into a mode of reasoning, which Dr Priestley cannot help thinking to be very prejudicial to the cause of that very *truth*, which he means to support, and favouring that very *scepticism*, which he imagined he was overthrowing.

I believe farther, continues Dr Priestley, and I most sincerely rejoice in it, that Dr Beattie's "Treatise" has done a great deal of

good to the cause of religion; and I hope it will still continue to do so, with a great majority of those who are most in danger of being seduced by the sophistry of Mr Hume, and other modern unbelievers; I mean with *superficial thinkers*, who are satisfied with seeing superficial objections answered, in a lively, though a superficial manner.

But there is danger, he adds, lest other persons, of greater penetration, finding, that Dr Beattie argues on fallacious unphilosophical principles, should reject at once, and without farther examination, all that he has built upon them. With respect to such persons, it may be of importance to show, Dr Priestley continues, that religion, though assailed from so many quarters as it has been of late, is under no necessity of taking refuge in such untenable fortresses, as Dr Reid, Dr Beattie, and Dr Oswald, have provided for her; but that she may safely face the enemy on his own ground, opposing argument to argument, and silencing sophistry by rational discussion. And as he believes Dr Beattie, he says, to be a man of candour, he doubts not, but he will himself take in good part his free animadversions. If *truth* be really our object, continues Dr Priestley, as it is in the titles of our books, and we be free from any improper bias, we shall rejoice in the detection of error, though it should appear to have sheltered itself under our own roofs. I am very serious, he goes on, when I add, that such a degree of candour and impartiality may be more especially expected of *Christians*, and, more especially still, of those who stand forth as champions in the cause of Christianity, which is at the same time the cause of the most important truth, and of the most generous and distinguished virtue.*

The declaration with which Dr Priestley prefaces his Examination of the "Essay on Truth," has, no doubt, an appearance of candour and moderation, which, however, does not very well agree with the manner in which he has conducted his attack. Indeed, no two writers were ever more opposite to each other in their modes of thinking on the most interesting subjects. Dr Priestley was an avowed Socinian; a staunch believer in the doctrine of necessity; and, though he admitted the great pillar of Christianity, the resurrection of the dead, yet he subscribed to the doctrine of material-

* Priestley's Remarks on Dr Beattie's Essay, p. 115.

ism.* In all this, and in many other particulars, the principles of Dr Beattie were the very reverse. The attack of Dr Priestley, however, gave him no concern. He appears, indeed, by his correspondence with his friends, to have formed, at first, the resolution of replying to it; and he speaks as if he had already prepared his materials, and of being altogether in such a state of forwardness, as to be fully ready for the task. On farther consideration, however, he abandoned the idea, and he no doubt judged wisely. For, while Dr Priestley's "Examination" is now never heard of, the "Essay on Truth" remains a classical work, of the highest reputation and authority.

In the following letter to one of his young friends, Dr Beattie speaks of the style of Addison, a topic on which he delighted to enlarge. Of the prose of that inimitable writer, he could not, indeed, speak too highly: but of his poetry, Dr Beattie's judgment seems to be too severe. While, on the other hand, most readers, I believe, will think his praise of the Comedy of "The Drummer," not a little extravagant.

In this letter, Dr Beattie mentions the story, which Pope and his friends certainly believed, that the first book of the "Iliad" was either translated by Addison himself in opposition to Pope, or if by Tickell, under Addison's direction. But of this no clear proof has ever been produced, nor any thing else than some slight and vague suspicions, of no authority. The learned Dr Hurd, the present Bishop of Worcester, in his Life of Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, has given an acute and ingenious dissertation on the subject, in which he strongly vindicates Addison from the charge brought against him by Pope and his friends, and shows, with every appearance of probability, that the translation was Tickell's own, and most likely begun by him before he knew any thing of Pope's undertaking. Dr Hurd adds some curious conjectures as to the cause of Pope's entertaining the suspicion, respecting this translation by Tickell, of which his Lordship has in his library a printed copy, wherein are entered many criticisms and remarks in Pope's

* Preface to "Disquisitions relating to matter and spirit," p. xiii.

own hand; and from two of these, compared together, the Bishop thinks the true ground of Pope's suspicion may, with great plausibility, be collected. He farther says, that on mentioning these circumstances to the Bishop of Gloucester, that prelate owned himself so much satisfied, that he declared, if he lived to publish a new edition of the works of Pope, he should omit the charge against Addison.*

In this letter to Mr Cameron, Dr Beattie, who could know nothing of this dissertation of the Bishop of Worcester's, because it was not printed till long afterwards, agrees exactly in opinion with the learned prelate, as to the versification of that first book of the "Iliad" being unworthy of Addison; and if Dr Beattie ever saw the dissertation, he must have rejoiced to find the memory of his favourite author so successfully vindicated, against this malignant reproach. The unfortunate quarrel between Pope and Addison, which gave occasion to one of the severest and most eloquent satires in the whole range of English poetry,† is well known.

LETTER CII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. MR WILLIAM CAMERON.‡

Aberdeen, 22d September, 1774.

"YOUR judgment of Addison is quite right. His prose is most elegant, and deserves to be carefully studied for the style, as well as for the matter. But his poetry is in general cold, and pro-

* Life of Bishop Warburton, prefixed to the edition of his works in quarto, p. 56—63.

† Pope's Works, Vol. IV. p. 17. Prologue to the Satires, l. 193.

‡ Minister of the parish of Kirk-Newton, in the county of West-Lothian. Having studied at Marischal-college, Aberdeen, he had been a pupil of Dr Beattie's, who ever after entertained for him much esteem, as Mr Cameron, in return, regarded Dr Beattie with sentiments of the warmest enthusiasm. Mr Cameron had early discovered a considerable degree of poetical genius, of which he has given no unfavourable specimen, in a small collection of poems, printed some years ago. The instructions to young students, in this letter, are excellent.

saic, and inharmonious. Yet his tragedy of "Cato" has great merit; and his comedy of "The Drummer" is, in my opinion, one of the best dramatic pieces in our language. He attempted a translation of Homer, and actually published the first book of it, under Tickell's name, in opposition to Pope's; but the performance is altogether unworthy of Addison, and totally destitute of the fire, and energy, and harmony of Homer.

"Your studies are in an excellent train. Read the classics day and night, till you make yourself master of them. Exercise yourself in frequent compositions in English prose. Write your thoughts on every subject, and carefully keep what you write. Attend to the phraseology of the best English writers, with a view to correct and improve your English style. We Scotsmen find it a very difficult matter to get rid of the barbarisms of our native dialect."

LETTER CIII.

MRS MONTAGU TO DR BEATTIE.

Hill-Street, January 17th, 1775.

"I APPROVE greatly of what you have said of Lord Chesterfield's letters; truth, so elegantly and concisely expressed, will make an impression on the head and heart, and efface the false principles those letters had introduced into the minds of the unwary.

"Lord Chesterfield was an example of the justice of your assertion, that if men believed one another to be knaves and hypocrites, politeness of language and attitude, instead of being graceful, would appear as ridiculous as the chattering of a parrot, or the grinning of a monkey. For the moment we are pleased with the imitation of sounds and gesture in the parrot or the ape, but that pleasure not arising from apprehension of some sentiment, expressed by voice or action, though we admire the art which effects the imitation, sympathies and affections are quite out of the question. Thus, all the world admired the politeness of Lord Chesterfield, and acknowledged the elegance of his civilities; they felt, at

the time, a soothing sweetness in his conversation; but all this was perfectly void of any mutual endearment, and they parted on the same terms as the audience and a musician; the first admiring the art which for a moment excited sentiment, unfelt by the artist; the other pleased with the impression he had made by the energies of his peculiar skill.

"I perfectly agree with you, that Dr Hawkesworth said many rash things in his works. I believe he was a good Christian, but not having had a literary education, he was not systematical; the human mind is liable to strange starts, if it has not been in early and good training. If voyages were well written, they would admirably evince the regular government and superintendence of providence, but ignorance, rashness, and a love of novelty, and the marvellous, makes them operate in a different direction.

"I am sure you will rejoice to hear the Dutchess of Portland is now well. It has pleased God to preserve still to us an example to the great, and a protector of the unfortunate, and the most amiable and valuable of friends. I had the happiness of passing yesterday evening with her, in her private dressing-room, in which I passed many of those youthful hours, which dance away with down upon their feet; but never did their smoothest pace, and gayest measure, give me such heart-felt delight, as last night's reflection on the many mercies that had led us both such a series of years, through a period of innocence, to the present time, so that we can look back with pleasure, and forward with hope, and while we remain here, by mercies past, may indulge a wish to cheer each other through the declining path of life."

LETTER CIV.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. DR PORTEUS.

Aberdeen, 4th March, 1775.

"I HAVE just finished a hasty perusal of Dr Johnson's journey. It contains many things worthy of the author, and is, on the whole, very entertaining. His account of "the Isles" is, I

dare say, very just; I never was there, and therefore can say nothing of them, from my own knowledge. His accounts of *some* facts, relating to other parts of Scotland, are not unexceptionable. Either he must have been misinformed, or he must have misunderstood his informer, in regard to several of his remarks on the improvement of the country. I am surprised at one of his mistakes, which leads him once or twice into perplexity, and false conjecture:—he seems not to have known, that, in the common language of Scotland, *Irish* and *Earse* are both used to denote the speech of the Scots Highlanders; and are as much synonymous (at least in many parts of the kingdom,) as *Scotch* and *Scottish*. *Irish* is generally thought the genteeler appellation, and *Earse* the vulgar and colloquial. His remarks on the *trees* of Scotland, must greatly surprise a native. In some of our provinces, trees cannot be reared by any method of cultivation we have yet discovered; in some, where trees flourish extremely well, they are not *much* cultivated, because they are not necessary: but in others, we have store of wood, and forests of great extent, and of great antiquity. I am sorry to see in Johnson some asperities, that seem to be the effect of national prejudice. If he thinks himself thoroughly acquainted with the character of the Scots as a nation, he is greatly mistaken. The Scots have virtues, and the Scots have faults, of which he seems to have had no particular information. I am one of those who wish to see the English spirit and English manners prevail over the whole island: for I think the English have a generosity and openness of nature, which many of us want. But we are not all, without exception, a nation of cheats and liars, as Johnson seems willing to believe, and to represent us. Of the better sort of our people, the character is just the reverse. I admire Johnson's genius; I esteem him for his virtues; I shall ever cherish a grateful remembrance of the civilities I have received from him: I have often, in this country, exerted myself in defence both of his character and writings: but there are in this book several things which I cannot defend. His unbelief, in regard to Ossian, I am not surprised at; but I wonder greatly at his credulity in regard to the second-sight. I cannot imagine, on what grounds he could say, that, in the universities of Scotland, every master of arts may be a doctor when he pleases. I never heard of such a thing, and I have been connected with our universities, ever since I was a boy. Our

method of giving doctors' degrees I do not approve of; but we proceed on a principle quite different from what Dr Johnson mentions."

LETTER CV.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Gatton-park, near Ryegate, 27th June, 1775.

"I WOULD have written to you long ago, if I had had time to write a long letter; but for six or seven weeks after I came to town, I was so constantly engaged with company, that I had no leisure at all. The greatest part of that time, I lodged with my friend Dr Porteus, at Lambeth, who did every thing in his power to amuse and entertain me. His conversation is cheerful, and occasionally even sportive: He is warm and zealous as a friend, kind, gentle, and polite as a companion. He is now gone to reside at one of his livings in the country, whither he earnestly wished us to follow him; but I am afraid we shall see him no more this summer. We are now with Sir William Mayne, at one of the finest places I have ever seen; a place adorned with every charm that hill and dale, lawn and grove, wood and water, can bestow, and which wants nothing but cataracts, precipices, barren mountains, and a view of the sea, to make it super-eminent in every rural beauty. But though we have not the sea, we have a boundless prospect of a rich country, extending upwards of thirty miles. Here I have made it my business to be as idle as possible, in order to indemnify myself for the fatigue and bustle of London: and since I came hither, my health has improved greatly. Mrs Beattie is also much better. But we must soon think of returning to the north, as we wish to be in Aberdeen early in August, and have many visits to make by the way.

"During my stay in London, I visited most of my old friends, and made several new acquisitions, particularly among the bishops and clergy, who all shewed me a degree of attention, far superior to my deservings. I have been at court too, where the King (who knew me at first sight) was pleased to speak to me very graciously,

asking me several questions about my studies, and observing, that I looked much better than when he saw me last.

"You will no doubt be curious to hear something of Priestley. I have not yet met with, nor heard of, one single person, who does not blame his book against Dr Reid and me. Even those of his admirers, who think favourably of his arguments, condemn the spirit of that performance. But the book has attracted very little notice, and would seem at present to be in a fair way of being speedily forgotten, notwithstanding the pains taken by its author to puff it away in newspapers. My inclination was (as I told you) to publish a pamphlet in direct answer to it. But I now begin to think, that will be unnecessary, and will only give scope to further controversy, Dr Priestley having already declared, that he will answer whatever I may publish in my own vindication; and being a man who loves bustle and book-making, he wishes above all things that I should give him a pretext for continuing the dispute. To silence him by force of argument, is, I know, impossible. He would still fall upon new modes of misrepresentation, and would still find it an easy matter to make a book, which should seem plausible to his implicit admirers, or to those who had entered but slightly into the subject. All my friends here have been urging me not to answer him; and have told me, what I know is true, that his work cannot possibly do me any harm, that it has been little read, and will soon be forgotten; that he is a man of that sort, that it is even creditable (on moral and religious subjects at least) to have him for an adversary; and that I cannot gratify him more, than by writing against him. All this, I say, I know to be true; yet I am not entirely of their opinion, who think that I ought to neglect him altogether. I therefore propose to take a middle course: and, without making any formal answer to Dr Priestley, to write something by way of *general answer* to those *objections to my doctrine* that have appeared hitherto in pamphlets or newspapers: observing, at the same time, that I do not think it worth while to reply to the *abuse* that has been thrown out against me, or to those *misrepresentations of my meaning*, which some authors, particularly Dr Priestley, have thought proper to obtrude upon the world."

LETTER CVI.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. DR PORTEUS.

St James's Square, July 9th, 1775.

"DR MAJENDIE has just returned to me the letter I wrote, declining the offer of the Church-living. I send it to you enclosed. He gave it to the Queen, who condescended to read it over from beginning to end, and was then pleased to say, "That it was a very "sensible letter, and did me much honour." I was anxious, that my reasons for choosing to continue a layman, should be known at court; as a report has been circulating, that I declined church-preferment in England, because I could not reconcile myself to the doctrines and discipline of the Church:—a report, which those who know me best know to be ill-founded. I admire the Church of England, on many accounts. I think I could, with a clear conscience, live and die a member, or even a minister of it. Its doctrines seem to me to be those of Christianity: its rites and ceremonies I greatly approve of, and the constitution of its hierarchy is equally favourable to the interests of religion, and the civil government of this country."

LETTER CVII.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 17th August, 1775.

"AFTER passing a few days with our friends at Edinburgh, we proceeded northwards, and arrived here in safety about ten days ago. The last stage of our journey was distinguished by an accident, which, if Providence had not interposed, would have made it the last stage of our life. The iron axle of the chaise snapt suddenly in two, and the carriage was thrown upon its side, within two feet

of the brink of a precipice, thirty yards deep. Here we lay for a few moments, with the horses flouncing about us, till at last, partly by the harness giving way, and partly by the activity of the postilion, they were disengaged from the carriage, and went off at full speed. An English gentleman, on horseback, was then in sight behind us, who immediately galloped up, and in the most humane manner enquired, whether he could be of any service; and, having seen us fairly rescued from our shattered vehicle, remounted his horse, galloped back to the inn, and soon returned with another chaise.

"I have begun my transcribing, which, even if I had nothing to do in the way of correction, would take up some hours of every day, for months to come. I have made many attempts at a preface to my quarto volume; but have not as yet been able to please myself. It seems to me, that the best way to obviate all objections, and to prevent mistakes, in regard to this publication, is to give a short and honest account of the plain matter of fact. This I have endeavoured to do in the inclosed paper, with which, if you approve of it, I intend to begin my preface. The sequel will contain some account of the additional essays, and of the improvements in this edition of the "Essay on Truth."

"To make some amends for the terrifying incident, recorded in the first part of this letter, I shall now mention a pleasing one, which was told me by a gentleman of this country, a friend of mine, who lately went to Stratford upon Avon, to pay his duty at the shrine of the *man of Warwickshire*. You certainly know, that Garrick erected a statue of Shakespeare, in a niche in the wall of the town-house, facing the street. As my friend was contemplating this statue, he saw, perched on one of the hands, a dove, which, at first he took for an emblem, as the creature was quite motionless; but which, in a little time, began to move, and scramble upwards, till it reached the bosom of the statue, in which, as in its home, it nestled, with great appearance of satisfaction. Charles Boyd, Lord Erroll's brother, has, I hear, composed a little poem on the subject, of which I shall send you a copy, as soon as I have seen the author. If Mr Garrick comes in your way, before you leave England, I am sure he will be pleased with this little narrative.

"The day after I returned home, I visited the little man, whose magnanimity you are pleased to reward, in so generous a manner.

I found him in great want of clothes, and very infirm; for he is now of a great age. I told him that a lady in England had desired me to give him some money. This very interesting news he received with much composure, but implored, with great fervour, the blessing of Heaven upon his benefactress. I have not seen him since that time. Since the days of chivalry, I do not suppose that any lady has had so complete a dwarf, as you, madam, have now at your service; for I cannot think that he is full three feet high."

LETTER CVIII.

MRS MONTAGU TO DR BEATTIE.

Tunbridge-wells, September 3d, 1775.

"IT was not without trembling and horror, I read the account of your overturn, and the dangerous circumstances with which it was attended. The traveller, who is obliged to traverse a pathless wilderness, or in a frail boat to cross the angry ocean, devoutly prays to the Omnipotent, to assist and preserve him; the occasion awakens his fears, and animates his devotion; but it is only from experience and reflection we are taught to consider every day, which passes in safety, and closes in peace, as a mercy. If I had known when you had set out from Denton, how near to a precipice you would have been thrown, I should more earnestly have prayed for your preservation through the journey; but the incident at once makes me sensible, that our safety depends, not on the road, but the hand that upholds and guides us.

"I left Denton the first day of August. On the second, by noon, I reached the episcopal palace of our friend, the Archbishop of York,* at Bishop's Thorpe. I had before visited him at his family-seat at Brodsworth. The man, who has a character of his own, is little changed by varying his situation; I can only say, that at his family-seat, I found him the most of a prelate of any gentleman, and at his palace, the most of a gentleman I had ever seen.

* Honourable Dr Hay Drummond, at that time Archbishop of York.

Native dignity is the best ground-work of assumed and special dignity. We talked a great deal of you; the subject was copious and pleasant. We considered you, as a poet, with admiration; as a philosopher, with respect; as a Christian, with veneration; and as a friend, with affection. His Grace's health is not quite what we could wish. I could indulge myself in no longer than one day's delay at Bishop's Thorpe. I then made the best of my way to London, and after a very short stay there, came to Tunbridge. I have the happiness of having Mrs Carter in my house, and Mrs Vesey is not at a quarter of a mile's distance; thus, though I live secluded from the general world, I have the society of those I love best. I propose to stay here about three weeks, then I return to London, to prepare for my expedition to the south of France. I have written to a gentleman at Montauban to endeavour to get for me a large house, in any part of that town. I am assured that the climate of Montauban is very delightful; the air is dry, but not piercing, as at Montpelier. There is but little society, but there are some provincial *noblesse*, amongst whom I hope to find some who are more in the *ton* of Louis XIV's court, than I should at Versailles. It is long before the polished manners of a court, arrive at the distant regions of a great country; but when there, they acquire a permanent establishment. At Paris, the minister, or the favourite of the day, is taken for the model, and there is a perpetual change of manners. I think with some pleasure of escaping the gloom of our winter, and the bustle of London, and passing my time in the blessings of cheerful tranquillity, and soft sunshine; at the same time, there is something painful in removing so far from one's dearest friends.

"I wish much to see the verses on the pretty incident of the dove's alighting on Shakespeare's statue. Of whatever nature and disposition the animal had been, he might have been presented as a symbol of Shakespeare. The gravity and deep thought of the bird of wisdom; the sublime flight of the eagle to the starry regions, and the throne of Jove; the pensive song of the nightingale, when she shuns the noise of folly, and sooths the midnight visionary; the pert jack-daw, that faithfully repeats the chit-chat of the market or the shop; the sky-lark, that, soaring, seems to sing to the denizens of the air, and set her music to the tone of beings of another region,—would all assort with the genius of universal Shakespeare."

LETTER CIX.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 17th September, 1775.

"YOUR reflections on the little disaster, with which our journey concluded, exactly coincide with mine. I agree with Hawkesworth, that the peril and the deliverance are equally providential; and I wonder he did not see that both the one and other may be productive of the very best effects. These little accidents and trials are necessary to put us in mind of that superintending goodness, to which we are indebted for every breath we draw, and of which, in the hour of tranquillity, many of us are too apt to be forgetful. But you, madam, forget nothing which a Christian ought to remember; and therefore I hope and pray that Providence may defend you from every alarm. By the way, there are several things, besides that preface to which I just now referred, in the writings of Hawkesworth, that shew an unaccountable perplexity of mind in regard to some of the principles of natural religion. I observed, in his conversation, that he took a pleasure in ruminating upon riddles, and puzzling questions, and calculations; and he seems to have carried something of the same temper into his moral and theological researches. His "Almoran and Hamet" is a strange confused narrative, and leaves upon the mind of the reader some disagreeable impressions in regard to the ways of providence; and from the theory of *pity*, which he has given us somewhere in the "Adventurer," one would suspect that he was no enemy to the philosophy of Hobbes. However, I am disposed to impute all this rather to a vague way of thinking, than to any perversity of heart or understanding. Only I wish, that in his last work he had been more ambitious to tell the plain truth, than to deliver to the world a wonderful story. I confess, that from the first I was inclined to consider his vile portrait of the manners of Otaheite, as in part fictitious; and I am now assured, upon the very best authority, that Dr Solander disavows some of those narrations, or at least declares them to be grossly misrepresented. There is, in

almost all the late books of travels I have seen, a disposition on the part of the author to recommend licentious theories. I would not object to the truth of any fact, that is warranted by the testimony of competent witnesses. But how few of our travellers are competent judges of the facts they relate! How few of them know any thing accurately, of the language of those nations, whose laws, religion, and moral sentiments, they pretend to describe! And how few of them are free from that inordinate love of the marvellous, which stimulates equally the vanity of the writer, and the curiosity of the reader. Suppose a Japanese crew to arrive in England, take in wood and water, exchange a few commodities; and, after a stay of three months, to set sail for their own country, and there set forth a history of the English government, religion, and manners: it is, I think, highly probable, that, for one truth, they would deliver a score of falsehoods. But Europeans, it will be said, have more sagacity, and know more of mankind. Be it so: but this advantage is not without inconveniencies, sufficient perhaps to counterbalance it. When a European arrives in any remote part of the globe, the natives, if they know any thing of his country, will be apt to form no favourable opinion of his intentions, with regard to their liberties; if they know nothing of him, they will yet keep aloof, on account of his strange language, complexion, and accoutrements. In either case he has little chance of understanding their laws, manners, and principles of action, except by a long residence in the country, which would not suit the views of one traveller in five thousand. He therefore picks up a few strange plants and animals, which he may do with little trouble or danger; and, at his return to Europe, is welcomed by the literati, as a philosophic traveller of most accurate observation, and unquestionable veracity. He describes, perhaps with tolerable exactness, the soils, plants, and other irrational curiosities of the new country, which procures credit to what he has to say of the people; though his accuracy in describing the material phenomena, is no proof of his capacity to explain the moral. One can easily dig to the root of a plant, but it is not so easy to penetrate the motive of an action; and till the motive of an action be known, we are no competent judges of its morality, and in many cases the motive of an action is not to be known without a most intimate knowledge of the language and manners of the agent. Our traveller then delivers a few facts of the moral kind, which

perhaps he does not understand, and from them draws some inferences suitable to the taste of the times, or to a favourite hypothesis. He tells us of a Californian, who sold his bed in a morning, and came with tears in his eyes to beg it back at night; whence, he very wisely infers, that the poor Californians are hardly one degree above the brutes in understanding, for that they have neither foresight nor memory sufficient to direct their conduct on the most common occasions of life. In a word, they are quite a different species of animal from the European; and it is a gross mistake to think, that all mankind are descended from the same first parents. But one needs not go so far as to California, in quest of men who sacrifice a future good to a present gratification. In the metropolis of Great Britain one may meet with many reputed Christians, who would act the same part, for the pleasure of carousing half a day in a gin-shop. Again, to illustrate the same important truth, that man is a beast, or very little better, we are told of another nation, on the banks of the Orellana, so wonderfully stupid, that they cannot reckon beyond the number three, but point to the hair of their head, whenever they would signify a greater number; as if four, and four thousand, were to them equally inconceivable. But, whence it comes to pass, that these people are capable of speech, or of reckoning at all, even so far as to three, is a difficulty, of which our historian attempts not the solution. But till he shall solve it, I must beg leave to tell him, that the one half of his tale contradicts the other as effectually, as if he had told us of a people, who were so weak as to be incapable of bodily exertion, and yet, that he had seen one of them lift a stone of a hundred weight.—I beg your pardon, madam, for running into this subject. The truth is, I was lately thinking to write upon it; but I shall not have leisure these many months.

"Take no farther concern about your dwarf. The person whom you honour with your notice, I shall always think it my duty to care for. I have let it be known in the town what you have done for him; which, I hope, will be a spur to the generosity of others. He has paid me but one visit as yet. His wants are few; and he seems to be modest as well as magnanimous. Both virtues certainly entitle him to consideration.

"I have not yet seen the verses on Shakespeare and the dove. One thing I am certain of, which is, that they will contain

nothing so much to the purpose, or so elegant, as what you have said on the occasion, in prose. You justly remark, that any bird of character, from the eagle to the sky-lark, from the owl to the mock-bird, might symbolize with one or other of the attributes of that universal genius. But do not you think, that his dove-like qualities are among those on which he *now* reflects with peculiar complacency? And I think it could be shown, from many things in his writings, that he resembled the dove, as much as the eagle. There are no surly fellows among his favourite characters; and he seems to excel himself in the delineation of a good-natured one. Witness his Brutus, who is indeed finished *con amore;* and who, in gentleness of nature, exceeds even the Brutus of the good-natured Plutarch, as this last exceeded, by many degrees, (if we are to believe some creditable historians) the true original Brutus, who fell at Philippi. There are besides, in the writings of Shakespeare, innumerable passages that bespeak a mind peculiarly attentive to the rights of humanity, and to the feelings of animal nature. Lear, when his distress is at the highest, sympathizes with those, who, amidst the pinchings of want and nakedness, are exposed to the tempestuous elements. I need not put you in mind of the *poor sequestered stag* in "As you like it;" nor need I say more on a subject, with which you are much better acquainted than I am."

LETTER CX.

THE REV. DR PORTEUS TO DR BEATTIE.

Lambeth, January 11th, 1776.

"I SHOULD have thanked you much sooner for your last letter, of the 17th of October, if I had not waited for a second from you, which you gave me reason to expect, in a short time after the first. This, I now conclude, has slipped your memory, or has been rendered impracticable, by your many important avocations, which, at this time of the year, I know, are very numerous. I am afraid, too, bad health has had some share in suspending your correspondence with your friends.

"I congratulate you, and Mrs Beattie, most cordially, on the many dangers you have escaped, since we saw you, both in your own persons, and that of your little boy. Your escape from the precipice, where your chaise was overturned, was really next to miraculous. At least, I am sure, it affords a strong argument in favour of a particular providence, and might very well be opposed to all the profound reasonings of Dr Hawkesworth against it. Though, I suppose the Doctor would have said in your case, as he did in that of the *Endeavour* on the rock, that, instead of interposing to deliver you *out* of that danger, it should have taken care to preserve you from ever coming *into* it.—But where then would have been that strong sense of God's favour and protection, that gratitude and thankfulness for so visible a mark of it, that entire trust and acquiescence in it for the future, which, I am sure, so singular an accident produces in your mind, and must have produced in every mind, not totally devoid of all religious principles, and devout sentiments?"

LETTER CXI.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. MR JOHN LUNDIE.*

Aberdeen, 17th September, 1775.

"I AM much obliged to you for the Latin translation of "Christ's Kirk on the Green." It is, as you observe, vastly inferior to Vincent Bourne. I have not had time to read it very critically; but I should imagine, from what I have seen, that the translator has not always hit his author's meaning. I know not on what authority we ascribe this old poem to our King James I. If it be his, which I very much doubt, it is surprising that he, a king, and

* Minister of the parish of Lonmay in Aberdeenshire, one of the very few remaining of Dr Beattie's earliest friends. My own intimate acquaintance with this venerable and respectable clergyman has subsisted, without interruption, for upwards of half a century.

who had his education in England, should be so well acquainted with the manners of the common people of Scotland."*

LETTER CXII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE HONOURABLE MR BARON GORDON. †

Aberdeen, 6th February, 1776.

"I HAVE been very much employed in preparing some little things of mine for the press; otherwise I should sooner have acknowledged the favour of your most obliging letter.

"The last time I read Virgil, I took it into my head, that the tenth and eleventh books of the Æneid were not so highly finished as the rest. Every body knows, that the last six books are less perfect than the first six; and I fancied that some of the last six came nearer to perfection than others. I cannot now recollect my reasons for this conceit; but I propose to read the Æneid again, as soon as I have got rid of this publication; and I hope I shall then be in a condition to give something of a reasonable answer to any question you may do me the honour to propose in regard to that matter.

* In the biographical account of our friend Mr Tytler, I have assigned some reasons for believing ‡ King James I. of Scotland to have been the author of "Christ's Kirk on the Green." In reply to Dr Beattie's surprise, how that Prince, who had his education in England, could be so well acquainted with the manners of the common people of Scotland, it may be observed, that James was eleven years of age before he left Scotland. He had therefore ample opportunity of being familiarly conversant with the characteristic sports and genius of the people among whom he had been brought up. And as what we see and hear, at that early period, makes the deepest and most lasting impression on the mind, even a captivity of nineteen years, in England, could not obliterate the ideas he had received in early youth, when he returned and took possession of his kingdom, in which he reigned thirteen years, before he was cut off by a foul assasination.

† Cosmo Gordon of Cluny, in Aberdeenshire, one of the Barons of his Majesty's Court of Exchequer in Scotland. Possessed of an ample paternal fortune, which, by economy, he had himself considerably improved, he lived

‡ See Appendix, [O.]

"I do not mean, that the tenth or eleventh books are at all imperfect; I only mean, that they fall short of Virgilian perfection. And many passages there are in both, which Virgil himself could not, in my opinion, have made better. Such are the story of Mezentius and Lausus, in the end of the tenth book; and that passage in the eleventh, where old Evander meets the dead body of his son. Mezentius is a character of Virgil's own contrivance, and it is extremely well-drawn: an old tyrant, hated by his people, on account of his impiety and cruelty, yet graced with one amiable virtue, which is sometimes found in very rugged minds, a tender affection for a most deserving son. Filial affection is one of those virtues which Virgil dwells upon with peculiar pleasure; he never omits any opportunity of bringing it in, and he always paints it in the most lovely colours. Æneas, Ascanius, Euryalus, Lausus, are all eminent for this virtue; and Turnus, when he asks his life, asks it only for the sake of his poor old father. Let a young man read the Æneid with taste and attention, and then be an undutiful child if he can. I think there is nothing very distinguishing in Camilla. Perhaps it is not easy to imagine more than one form of that character. The adventures of her early youth, are, however, highly interesting, and wildly romantic. The circumstance of her being, when an infant, thrown across a river, tied to a javelin, is so very singular, that I should suppose Virgil had found it in some history; and, if I mistake not, Plutarch has told such a story of King Pyrrhus. The battle of the horse, in the end of the eleventh book, is well conducted, considering that Virgil was there left to his shifts, and had not Homer to assist him. The speeches of Drances and Turnus are highly animated; and nothing could be better contrived to

with splendid hospitality, and very successfully cultivated letters, and courted the society of men of learning. Having the advantage, himself, of a correct taste, and much classical learning, particularly in the best Roman authors, with whom he was familiarly acquainted, Mr Baron Gordon was a most entertaining companion, as well as excellent correspondent. He was much attached to Dr Beattie, who frequently spent some days with him, at his seat of Cluny, not far from Aberdeen: and to him, jointly with Major Mercer, Mr Arbuthnot, and myself, Dr Beattie dedicated the volume of his son's miscellanies, and the account of his life, which was printed soon after his death. I enjoyed the benefit of Mr Baron Gordon's intimate acquaintance, from a very early period of life. He died in Edinburgh, 19th November, 1800.

raise our idea of Æneas, than the answer which Diomede gives to the ambassadors from the Italian army.

"I ought to ask pardon for troubling you with these superficial remarks. But a desire to approve myself worthy of being honoured with your commands, has led me into a subject, for which I am not at present prepared. When I have the pleasure to pay my respects to you at Cluny, which, I hope, will be early in the summer, I shall be glad to talk over these matters, and to correct my opinions by yours."

LETTER CXIII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. MR CAMERON.

Aberdeen, 22d February, 1776.

"THE objections to the "Essay on Truth," which you hint at, have been often urged by the Edinburgh critics. The reasons, it is not difficult to discover, which make them particularly severe on that performance; but I have met with more candour and less prejudice elsewhere. Even in Edinburgh, there are many worthy and learned persons, who have done me the honour to approve what I did, with a sincere purpose to advance the cause of truth, and do good to society.

"Your good principles, and your good heart, will secure you against the sneers and sophistries of persons, who dislike religion out of prejudice, and are dissatisfied with the evidence of it, which they do not understand, because they have never examined it. Bear always in mind this truth, which admits of the most satisfactory proof: No person of a good heart understands Christianity without wishing it to be true: and no person of a good judgment ever studied its evidence, impartially, and with a sincere wish that it might be true, who did not really find it so."

In the course of the year 1776, the new edition, in quarto, of his "Essay on Truth," so long expected, made its appearance. Of this publication, by subscription, as the nature and original inten-

tion of it had been somewhat misunderstood, he had given an explanation, in a letter to Lady Mayne,* written soon after the subscription was set on foot. Various causes, chiefly his own bad health, had retarded the publication till now. But when at last the book did appear, it amply rewarded the subscribers, and the public, for the delay. To the "Essay on Truth" he gave a preface, (dated 30th April, 1776,) in which he says, that "This new edition "will, it is hoped, be found less faulty than any of the former. "Several inaccuracies are removed, unnecessary words and sen- "tences expunged, a few erroneous passages either cancelled or "rectified, and some new-modelled in the style, which before "seemed too harshly, or too strongly expressed." "But, in "regard to the reasons and general principles of this Essay," he had not, he says, "seen cause to alter his opinion; though he had "carefully attended to what had been urged against them by "several ingenious authors. Some objection," he adds, "will "perhaps be found obviated by occasional remarks and amend- "ments, interspersed in this edition." He closes his preface, by mentioning an advertisement, prefixed by Mr Hume, to a new edition of his "Essays," in which that writer seems to disown his *Treatise of Human Nature*, and desires that those "Essays, as then "published, may be considered as containing his philosophical "sentiments and principles."

In reply to this advertisement, Dr Beattie, after giving an account of the reasons which had at first induced him to publish the "Essay on Truth," goes on to say, "Our author certainly merits "praise for thus publicly disowning, though late, his *Treatise of* "*Human Nature*; though I am sorry to observe, from the tenor "of his declaration, that he still seems inclined to adhere to "'most of the reasonings and principles contained in that trea- "tise.' But if he has now at last renounced any one of his er- "rors, I congratulate him upon it, with all my heart. He has "many good, as well as great qualities; and I rejoice in the hope, "that he may yet be prevailed on to relinquish, totally, a system, "which, I should think, would be as uncomfortable to him, as it "is unsatisfactory to others. In consequence of his advertisement, "I thought it right to mitigate, in this edition, some of the cen-

* See p. 224.

"sures that more especially refer to the *Treatise of Human* "*Nature:* but as that treatise is still extant, and will probably be "read as long at least as any thing I write, I did not think it ex- "pedient to make any material change in the reasoning, or in the "plan of this performance."*

Besides the "Essay on Truth," the volume contains three other essays; "On Poetry and Music, as they affect the Mind." "On Laughter, and Ludicrous Composition." "On the Utility of "Classical Learning." Subjects in themselves extremely interesting to every reader of taste, and all of which he has treated in a very masterly manner.† And to the whole there is prefixed a list of nearly five hundred subscribers, containing the names of many of the most distinguished characters for rank and learning, both in the church and state; an honourable testimony to the merit of Dr Beattie, and highly creditable to the period in which he lived.

LETTER CXIV.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 2d August, 1776.

"YOUR manuscript is perfectly safe. I have read it through, and have written a few remarks (very slight ones indeed) on the first part of it. You have treated of some subjects that are highly important, and withal very difficult. That of Providence I have chiefly in my eye. You treat it with great accuracy and clearness; but you seem to me rather too anxious to get to the bottom of it, and explain it in such a way as shall leave few or no difficulties unsolved. Now, I presume, this is not necessary. The mysteries of Providence are perhaps unsearchable, in some degree, to all created beings. We are not obliged in these matters to be *wise above what is written;* and I know not whether a habit of thinking too deeply

* Preface to the edition in 4to of Dr Beattie's Essays, published in 1776, p. ix—xiv.

† For some farther account of these essays, see Appendix, [Y.]

on certain points, may not rather tend to darken, than to illuminate the understanding. It certainly produces a facility of devising objections, which, though we see they are frivolous, may give us a great deal of trouble. I wish my son to believe what the Scripture declares concerning Providence; but I would not wish him to enter so far into the subject, as ever to be puzzled in his attempts to reconcile Divine decrees with contingency, or the Divine prescience with human liberty. This, however, is only *my* opinion; I would not urge it upon you, and perhaps, if I shall ever regain my former health and spirits, I may have less disinclination to these subjects, than I have at present. But I will endeavour to explain myself on this point more intelligibly hereafter."

In the following letter to Mr Cameron, Dr Beattie speaks of a plan, at that time in agitation, of a new and improved poetical version of the Psalms, for the use of the Church of Scotland, of which more will be said hereafter.

LETTER CXV.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. MR CAMERON.

Aberdeen, 4th August, 1776.

"I APPROVE greatly of your design of versifying some passages of Scripture, for the enlargement of our Psalmody. You cannot employ your muse in a way more honourable to yourself, or more useful to your country. The specimen you sent to me, I think extremely good. I returned it, as you desired, to the gentleman, after marking, with a pencil, a few criticisms which then occurred to me. You judge very rightly in regard to the style that is most proper in these compositions. It should be perfectly simple and perspicuous, without any quaintness, and free from all superfluous epithets. At the same time, it should be harmonious

and elegant, and equally remote from rusticity and affectation. In a word, it should have dignity to please the best judges, and a plainness adapted to the meanest capacity.

"I received a letter some time ago, from the Secretary of the Committee for the enlargement of the Psalmody, to which I meant to have returned an answer, but have hitherto been prevented by bad health, and an unusual hurry of business. The business is now almost over, but, unhappily, I have not recovered my health: and therefore, I fear, it will be a considerable time before I be in a condition to write that answer, which will be a pretty long one, and contain some remarks on the several English versions of the Psalms, with a proposal for a new version to be made, by collecting all the best passages of the other versions.

"The ground-work of this new version, ought (I think) to be that which we now use in the Church of Scotland, and which, according to my notions in these matters, is the best that has yet appeared in English; though it is neither so elegant in the language, nor so perspicuous in the meaning, as it might easily be made. Tate and Brady are too quaint, and where the Psalmist rises to sublimity, (which is very often the case) are apt to sink into bombast; yet Tate and Brady have many good passages, especially in those psalms that contain simple enunciations of moral truth. Sternhold and Hopkins are in general bad, but have given us a few stanzas that are wonderfully fine, and which ought to be adopted in this new version. Watts, though often elegant, and in many respects valuable, is too paraphrastical: from him, I would propose, that a good deal should be taken; but I would not follow him implicitly. King James's version, which is the basis of that which we use in Scotland, is, considering the age and the author, surprisingly good: and in many places has the advantage of ours, notwithstanding that this was intended as an improvement upon it. Now my scheme is, to take the best passages of these versions, and out of them to make a new version. You say, it would be a motley piece of work, if so many authors were concerned in it. I answer, no; if the collection were judiciously made. Besides, the Psalms themselves are the work of several authors, David, Asaph, Moses, &c.—Where then is the absurdity of translating them in the manner I hint at? The version I speak of, I mean only to propose, and give some hints for conducting it; I am not at all qualified for such

a work. My ignorance of the Hebrew tongue is alone sufficient disqualification.

"I had no hand in the collection of *Paraphrases* of some passages of Scripture, published about twenty or thirty years ago, and sometimes printed in the end of our Psalm-books. That collection appeared long before I was of age to attempt any sort of composition, either in verse or prose."

On the 15th August, 1776, Mr Hume died in Edinburgh, after having been afflicted for more than a twelvemonth with a complaint which he himself believed would prove fatal. His death, therefore, he had foreseen for some considerable time; yet his cheerfulness, and composure of mind, remained unabated, and he even exerted, at times, a playful humour, not altogether decorous in so solemn a situation.*

The world was not naturally unsolicitous to see, whether Mr Hume, in his dying moments, would express any sentiments different from those which he had published in his philosophical writings. But although he retained the full possession of his faculties to the last, he preserved a most cautious silence on that subject, and never uttered a word that could indicate whether any change had taken place in his opinions or not. There is every reason to believe, however, that his sentiments remained still the same: for he left for publication, a treatise, entitled, "Dialogues "on Natural Religion," of a similar strain with those which had been printed during his life-time.

The following letter was written on occasion of the death of the Reverend Mr Carr, the worthy clergyman of the Episcopal Chapel in Edinburgh, which I attend. The congregation having determined to erect a monument to the memory of their deceased pastor, committed the execution of it to Mr Arbuthnot and me. Being anxious to avail ourselves of Dr Beattie's aid, we sent him an inscription, which seemed to be such as was wished for; but of which we requested the favour of his correction.

* Dr Adam Smith's Letter to Mr Strahan, p. xxi.

than an evil. But my notions in this respect may perhaps be whimsical, and therefore I will not trouble you with them.

"You judge very rightly of Dr Campbell's book:* it is indeed a most ingenious performance, and contains more curious matter, on certain topics of criticism, than any other book I am acquainted with.

"Lord Monboddo's third volume† I have not yet seen. It will certainly be full of learning and ingenuity: but perhaps the author's excessive admiration of the Greek writers may lead him into some paradoxes, and make him too insensible to the merits of modern literature. I have a great respect for Lord Monboddo; I know him to be a learned and a worthy man; and I am greatly concerned to see him adopt some opinions, which, I fear, are not very salutary.

"But I know nobody that has less occasion than yourself to study these authors, with a view to the formation of a good style. I beg your partiality to me may not so blind you to the faults of mine, as ever to make you think of studying it for a pattern. You are pleased to pay me compliments on this head, which I do not by any means deserve. The style of my letters, whatever you and Mr Arbuthnot may say, is not a good style; it has nothing of that accuracy, that ease, or that simplicity, which it ought to have. Nay, in the prose I have printed, my expression, after all the pains I have taken about it, is not what I wish it to be: it is too pompous, and, I fear, too visibly elaborate; and there is often a harshness and a stiffness in it, which I would fain avoid, but cannot. Even provincial improprieties, I know, I am not proof against, though few people have been more careful to keep clear of them. The longer I study English, the more I am satisfied that Addison's prose is the best model: and if I were to give advice to a young man on the subject of English style, I would desire him to read that author day and night. I know not what may be the opinion of others; but, in my own judgment, that part of my writings, which in the article of style has the least demerit, is *An Essay on Laughter*, which is now in the press; yet perhaps my partiality to it may be owing to this circumstance, that it is the last thing I corrected."

* Philosophy of Rhetoric.

† Origin and Progress of Language. See p. 17.

The following letter to me was written after my recovery from a dangerous illness. It contains some important observations on a very solemn subject.

LETTER CXVII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 22d January, 1777.

"I SHALL not attempt, my dear sir, to tell you, what a transition from grief to happiness I lately experienced, on occasion of your illness and recovery. Your own heart will teach you to conceive it, but I have no words to express it.

"The account you give me of your thoughts and feelings, when your disorder was at the height, is very interesting. That *insensibility* which you complain of, and blame yourself for, is, I believe, common in all similar cases; and a merciful appointment of Providence it is. By deadening those affections, to which life is indebted for its principal charm, it greatly alleviates the pangs of dissolution. In fact, the pains of death to a man in health appear much more formidable, than to a dying man. This at least is my opinion; and I have been led into it by what has been observed, of some people's displaying a fortitude, or composure, at the hour of death, who had all their lives been remarkably timorous and weak-minded. The proximate cause of this, I take to be that same *stupor* which gradually steals upon our senses, as our dissolution draws near. And that the approach of death should produce this *stupor*, needs not surprise us, when we consider, that the approach even of sleep has something of the same effect; and that the keenness of our passions and feelings, in general, depends very much, even when we are in tolerable health, upon our bodily habit. If sleep is found to disorder our reason, and give a peculiar wildness to our fancy; if memory may be hurt, as it certainly has been, by a blow on the head; if a superabundance of certain bodily humours give rise to certain passions in the mind; if drunkenness divest a man, for a time, of his character, and even of many of his favourite opinions (for I have known a staunch Presbyterian, who was always a Ro-

man Catholic in his liquor); if even a full meal gives a languor to the mind, and impairs a little our faculties of invention and judgment; we have good reason to think, that the connection between our soul and body is very intimate; and may therefore admit the probability of what I now advance, namely, that when the powers and energies of the human body are disordered by the near approach of death, it is scarcely possible that the soul should perceive or feel with its wonted acuteness. The *stupor*, therefore, you mention, was something in which your will had no part, but the natural and necessary effect of a cause purely material. I ask pardon for all this philosophy; which, however, I cannot conclude, without one remark more; which is, that this doctrine, if true, ought to be matter of comfort to a good man, as well as an alarm to such as are not of that character. To the former, it promises an easy dissolution; and it ought to teach the latter, that of all places on earth, a death-bed is the most improper for devotion or repentance.

"You smile, perhaps, at the seriousness of these remarks; but I am led into them by reading your letter, and considering the occasion of it. I must repeat, that you are a very severe judge of yourself. You are conscious, you say, of many faults, which the world does not see in you. But you ought to remember, that every man is frail and fallible; and the virtue even of the best man, must, in order to appear meritorious at the great tribunal, have something added to it, which man cannot bestow.

"I must put a stop, however, to these grave remarks; and to descend at once from a very important to a most trifling subject, I shall now speak a word or two, concerning my own works.

"It is very kind in you to speak so favourably of these "Essays."* You will see I have not laid claim to much originality in these performances. My principal purpose was to make my subject plain and entertaining, and, as often as I could, the vehicle of moral instruction; a purpose to which every part of the philosophy of the human mind, and indeed of science in general, may, and ought, in my opinion, to be made in some degree subservient. I was very much on my guard against paradoxes; yet I expect that many of

* On POETRY AND MUSIC as they affect the Mind.
On LAUGHTER AND LUDICROUS COMPOSITION.
On the Utility of CLASSICAL LEARNING. Printed in 1776.
See Appendix, [AA.]

my opinions, those especially that relate to music and classical learning, will meet with opposition. Mr Tytler writes me word, that he cannot admit all my doctrine on the subject of music; but, if I rightly understand what he has said very briefly on that subject, I should imagine, that, if he would favour that part of my book with a second perusal, he would find that his notions and mine are not very different. To me, indeed, they do not seem to differ at all. I should be sorry if they did; as I believe he knows more of that, as well as of other matters, than I do. I am already sensible of several inaccuracies and defects in my book; for I was in a most miserable state of health when I sent it to the press: and I know not how it is, that I can never judge rightly of my own style, till I see it in print. If the book comes to a second edition, and if I have health to make any alterations, there are many things which must be corrected. I should be glad to hear how it takes with your people in general.

"You may believe Dr Porteus's advancement* gives me great pleasure. It was what I did expect, though I am sure he did not. He says in his last letter, "I have reason to believe, that I owe "this advancement principally to the goodness of their Majesties, "who have been graciously pleased to think me deserving of much "higher honours than I had ever the presumption to look up to." When I was in England in 1775, the Doctor told me, that he was not particularly known to the King at that time; but I told him, I had good reason to believe, that his Majesty esteemed him very highly. Indeed I know no man that better deserves to wear the mitre. He is not older than I am; and I think he looks much younger: but he is exemplary in the discharge of his duty as a clergyman, a cheerful pleasant companion, and of the gentlest manners; he is, withal, an excellent scholar, a most elegant writer, and a man of business. He, and Dr Hurd, Bishop of Litchfield,† are, I think, the best preachers I ever heard. Indeed, before I heard them, I cannot say that I distinctly knew what true pulpit eloquence was. The king seems determined to promote to the Episcopal bench such clergymen only as are most distinguished for piety and learning.

* To the Bishoprick of Chester.

† Now Bishops of London and Worcester.

Dr Markham, now Archbishop of York, and the present Bishops of Chester and Litchfield, had not originally any other influence than what their own merit gave them. Dr Hurd was never at Court till he went to kiss the King's hand, on being nominated to the see of Litchfield."

LETTER CXVIII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 19th February, 1777.

"I HAVE now, my dear Sir, read over your papers * with all the attention I am capable of, and have made a few, a very few slight remarks in the margin. The perusal has given me very great pleasure, and I beg you will send me the rest as soon as you conveniently can. Every thing you say in regard to the evidence of religion has my most hearty concurrence; one or two sentences or phrases excepted, which are not at all material. What these are, you will see when I return the papers. I am clearly of opinion that these papers will make a most valuable addition to the book. Mr Jenyns's late treatise, I observe, is a favourite of yours. There is indeed a great deal in it of very solid and ingenious remark; and I am convinced it will do much good. It were perhaps to be wished, that the author had made fewer concessions to the adversary, and spoken with more respect of the *external* evidences. But when one takes up a favourite hypothesis or argument, it is hardly possible to avoid carrying it rather too far;—such is the weakness of human nature. I mean not to object to Mr Jenyns's favourite argument; it is surely most satisfactory to every candid mind; and he has done it more justice than any other author I am acquainted with. I only wish his plan would have allowed him to touch upon the external evidences, which ought never to be overlooked by those who would

* "Letters on the Religious Belief and Practical Duties of a Christian," written by the author of these Memoirs for the instruction of his children, still in MS.

acquit themselves as the champions of Christianity. I began a little Treatise, some years ago, on the evidences of our religion, but have never finished it; and indeed Mr J.'s Treatise has in part superseded mine. My meaning was, to make the subject plain and entertaining, and suited to all capacities, especially to those of young people. Like Mr Jenyns, I intended only a little book; but it must have been larger than his, because I should have considered but the *external* and the *internal* evidence."*

LETTER CXIX.

DR BEATTIE TO DR PORTEUS, BISHOP OF CHESTER.

———— 2d October, 1777.

"I AM much obliged to your Lordship for your entertaining account of the ancient city of Chester, and its neighbourhood. It must certainly be as you observe, well worthy the traveller's attention; and if it is ever my fortune to revisit the west of England, I shall be inexcusable if I do not direct my course to a place, which I am now, on many accounts, ambitious to be acquainted with.

"Of literary matters I can say nothing. The doctor commanded me, on pain of death, to abstain wholly from writing, and to read nothing but novels, or such books as require no attention. I have followed the prescription most punctually; and, since my fever in the spring, have not written half-a-dozen pages, (letters included) nor read any thing but Don Quixote, Spenser's Fairy Queen, and Horace, which last I have read over three times. As I have not read Dr Robinson's last work, I cannot form any opinion about it. Lord Kaimes has published a book of agriculture, which, they say, is the best of all his works, Dr Campbell lately printed another excellent sermon, preached at Edinburgh before the "Society for propagating Christian Knowledge." The subject is, "The success of the first preaching of the gospel, a proof of its truth." I shall

* This he afterwards most admirably accomplished in his "Evidences of the Christian Religion," published in 1786.

have the honour to send your Lordship a copy of this sermon as soon as I return to Aberdeen. I have read Captain Cooke's preface, which gives me a very high opinion of the author: I wish for an opportunity to read the whole book. When a man of sense and spirit publishes the history of his own affairs, the world is a thousand times better instructed, than by the most elaborate compositions of the mere book-maker."

LETTER CXX.

THE BISHOP OF CHESTER TO DR BEATTIE.

Hunton, November 28th, 1777.

"DURING our stay here, Dr Robertson's "History of America" has been part of our evening's amusement. He is, without dispute, a very judicious compiler, and very elegant writer, and seems to have taken great pains in this work to collect all the information that could possibly be obtained from books and manuscripts, of which he has consulted a considerable number. Of these, some of the most curious were communicated to him by my friend, Lord Grantham, ambassador at Madrid, and his chaplain, Mr Waddilove. But still the grand source of original information was not opened to him; I mean the letters and papers written to the Spanish court by the first conquerors of America, and all the authentic documents relative to that transaction, which were collected by Philip the Second, and deposited amongst the archives of the Spanish monarchy, at a place called Simanca, near Valladolid, above a hundred miles from Madrid. To these he could obtain no access; and till these are produced to the world, I shall never suppose that we have any history of South America that can be absolutely relied upon. As far, however, as Dr Robertson's materials go, he has set them off to the best advantage, and has enlivened them by many ingenious and useful observations on the natural and moral history of the Aborigines of that country. He has, however, I think, missed some opportunities, which this part of his work threw in his way, of drawing a comparison between the state of the savage and of the Christian world. He attributes the difference

between them solely to the improvements of civil society. I am of opinion, that the gospel has had a large share in this happy change; and it would have been of infinite service to religion, to have had all its beneficial consequences set forth by so fine a pen as Dr Robertson's. Such incidental arguments, in favour of religion, interspersed occasionally in works of acknowledged merit and reputation, are perhaps of more general use than professed defences of it. The enemies of Christianity have long taken this method of undermining it, and its friends therefore should not be backward in taking the same means to recommend it. Mr Gibbon and the Abbé Raynal have more especially distinguished themselves by this species of hostility; for which reason I am sorry that Dr Robertson has paid them both such high compliments as he has done.

"I hear of nothing new and important in the literary world that is likely to make its appearance this winter, except a new translation of Isaiah, by Bishop Lowth; of which the public has raised its expectations very high, from the known abilities and learning of the author. This, I believe, is in very great forwardness. There is also an edition of "Strabo," by Mr Falkner, a gentleman of Chester, every way equal to the undertaking, which is pretty far advanced. Archbishop Markham shewed me, the other day, a collation for him, of a manuscript in the Escurial, made under the direction of Canonico Bayer, and procured by the assistance of Lord Grantham."

LETTER CXXI.

DR BEATTIE TO SYLVESTER DOUGLAS, ESQ. NOW LORD GLENBERVIE.*

Aberdeen, 5th January, 1778.

"I AM much entertained with your plan of writing upon the Scottish barbarisms, accent, &c. It is a very extensive one;

* Between whom and Dr Beattie an intimacy, contracted in early life, subsisted mutually, and without interruption, for a long course of years. I also claim the distinction of ranking Lord Glenbervie among the number of those who have honoured me with their regard; and he and I are now two of the very few surviving associates of Dr Beattie's early friendship.

and, in your hands, will be very entertaining and useful. Most of the topics you mention have occasionally engrossed my attention. I have written many sheets upon Scotticism, and the structure and rules of our verse, and how far the English tongue is attainable by a native of Scotland, and in what respects it is not attainable (I mean, a person who does not go to live in England till he is grown up). I once intended to *publish* something on English prosody and versification, but I believe my literary pursuits are all over.

Vos, O quibus integri ævi—
Me si cælicolæ voluissent——

The greatest difficulty in acquiring the art of *writing* English, is one which I have seldom heard our countrymen complain of, and which I was never sensible of till I had spent some years in labouring to acquire that art. It is, to give a *vernacular* cast to the English we write. I must explain myself. We who live in Scotland are obliged to study English from books, like a dead language. Accordingly, when we write, we write it like a dead language, which we understand, but cannot speak; avoiding, perhaps, all ungrammatical expressions, and even the barbarisms of our country, but at the same time without communicating that neatness, ease, and softness of phrase, which appears so conspicuously in Addison, Lord Lyttelton, and other elegant English authors. Our style is stately and unwieldy, and clogs the tongue in pronunciation, and smells of the lamp. We are slaves to the language we write, and are continually afraid of committing *gross* blunders; and, when an easy, familiar, idiomatical phrase occurs, dare not adopt it, if we recollect no authority, for fear of Scotticisms. In a word, *we* handle English, as a person who cannot fence handles a sword; continually afraid of hurting ourselves with it, or letting it fall, or making some awkward motion that shall betray our ignorance. An English author of learning is the master, not the slave, of his language, and wields it gracefully, because he wields it with ease, and with full assurance that he has the command of it.

In order to get over this difficulty, which I fear is in some respects insuperable after all, I have been continually poring upon Addison, the best parts of Swift, Lord Lyttelton, &c. The ear is of great service in these matters; and I am convinced the greater part

of Scottish authors hurt their style by admiring and imitating one another. At Edinburgh it is currently said by your critical people, that Hume, Robertson, &c. write English better than the English themselves; than which, in my judgment, there cannot be a greater absurdity. I would as soon believe that Thuanus wrote better Latin than Cicero or Cæsar, and that Buchanan was a more elegant poet than Virgil or Horace. In my rhetorical lectures, and whenever I have occasion to speak on this subject to those who pay any regard to my opinion, I always maintain a contrary doctrine, and advise those to study English authors, who would acquire a good English style.

"I agree with you, that many of the vulgar words used in Scotland may be traced to the Saxon, German, Dutch, &c. The French too, and the Erse, come in for their share, especially the former. French etymologies abound most in the counties to the south of Aberdeen, in Mearns, Angus, &c. where you know the natives in their pronunciation have the sound of the French *U*. I know of no etymological dictionary of this dialect; but a great deal of the knowledge to be expected in such a dictionary may be found in Ray's "Collection of English Proverbs," but especially in Ruddiman's "Glossary to Bishop Douglas's Virgil." This last is a most learned piece of lexicography. You will see it in that edition of "Gavin Douglas," which was printed at Edinburgh in folio, in 1710. I need not tell you, that the Scottish dialect is different in almost every province. The common people of Aberdeen speak a language, that would scarce be understood in Fife; and how much the Buchan dialect differs from that of Lothian, may be seen by comparing Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd" with "Ajax's Speech to the Grecian Knabbs," which you will no doubt remember to have seen in your youth. I have attended so much to this matter, that I think I could know by his speech, a native of Banffshire, Buchan, Aberdeen, Dee-side, Mearns, Angus, Lothian, and Fife, as well as of Rossshire, and Inverness.

"I am inclined to think, that Erse was once the universal language of Scotland. For you find all over the Low-lands, that the names of the old places are almost all derived from that language. It is remarkable, that on the northern side of that great hollow or *strath*, which we call the *How of the Mearns*, the names of places are generally Erse, and on the south side English or

Saxon. This seems to prove, that the former district was first inhabited, which is indeed probable from other circumstances; for it fronts the sun, and is sheltered from the north wind by the Grampian mountains."

As an introduction to the following letter, it may be proper to mention, that not long after Garrick's celebration of the jubilee at Stratford-upon-Avon, in honour of Shakespeare, in the year 1769, some gentlemen at Edinburgh proposed also to celebrate a jubilee in honour of our countryman, Thomson. But there not appearing a sufficient number of persons of any note, to give respectability to such a meeting, the idea was laid aside. A few years afterwards, Mr Craig, an architect of some merit, who designed the plan of the new town of Edinburgh, and the hall of the College of Physicians there, a nephew of Thomson's, formed the design of erecting a monument to his memory, at the village of Ednam, on the banks of the Tweed, the place of Thomson's birth, and Dr Beattie was requested to write an inscription. The site of the proposed monument was the summit of Ednam hill. This eminence slopes regularly and beautifully to the surrounding valley, and commands a most extensive prospect; so that the intended monument would have been seen for many miles in every direction. But this intention was frustrated by Craig's death. In order, however, that the memory of the poet might not remain altogether unhonoured, several gentlemen, who reside in the neighbourhood of Ednam, have formed themselves into a society, which for some years past has met there annually on the birth day of Thomson.

The following letter of Dr Beattie's, besides the inscription, contains some excellent remarks on that species of composition.

LETTER CXXII.

DR BEATTIE TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 22d July, 1778.

"MR CRAIG does me too much honour. I am proud to be thought of so favourably by so ingenious an artist, and by the nephew of a man who was an honour to his country and to man-

kind; and to whose writings I am under very particular obligations: for if I have any true relish for the beauties of nature, I may say with truth, that it was from Virgil and from Thomson that I caught it. The memory of this amiable poet cannot be dearer to any person than it is to me; and I should be heartily sorry, if the monument, to be erected for him, were not such, in every respect, as he himself would have approved. Mr Craig will, I am sure, make it such in the architecture; and, if he follow his own ideas, in the inscription too. But since he does me the honour to desire to have my opinion, I shall give it with the greatest sincerity. I think, then, that all public inscriptions, whether intended for tombs, or cenotaphs, or bridges, or any other public building, are made with a view to catch the eye of the traveller, and convey to him, not the wit of the composer, but some authentic information in regard to the object that draws his attention, and is supposed to raise his curiosity. On this principle, all such writings ought to be perfectly simple, and true, and as concise as the subject and language will admit. This is the character of the Greek and Roman inscriptions, which it is a pity the moderns have so rarely imitated: for, in my mind, nothing is more barbarous than those mixtures of verse and prose, of Latin and English, of narration and common-place morality, which appear in our churches and churchyards, and other public places. A Gothic arch supported by Corinthian pillars, or a statue with painted cheeks and a hat and wig, is not a greater absurdity. To set up a pillar with a Latin inscription, for the information of those who understand no language but English, is not less absurd. I never heard of a Greek inscription at Rome, nor of a Latin one at Athens. Latin is perhaps a more durable language than English, and may therefore be used in those inscriptions that are put on the foundation-stones of bridges, and hid under ground; for these, it may be presumed, will not be read till a thousand years hence, when all our modern languages will probably be unintelligible. But I cannot but think, that an English inscription, exposed to wind and weather in this climate, will be understood as long as it can be read. I would therefore, humbly propose, that what is intended for Thomson's monument should be in English, the tongue which he spoke, and to which his writings do so much honour, and the tongue which all travellers who visit Ednam may be supposed to understand: that it should

be simple and concise, not in verse (for this appears more like ostentation of wit than an authentic record), but in prose, well modulated, totally free from all quaintness, superfluous words, and flowery ornaments,—something to the same purpose with the following, and in a similar style. But observe, that as I do not mean to enter the lists with either of the two great writers,* who have already prepared inscriptions for this work, I offer the following rather as a hint towards one, than as a finished performance. And let me remark by the way, that I have been more devoted to this simplicity of style in public inscriptions, ever since I read a verbose and flowery one in Latin, near the banks of Loch Lomond, to the memory of Doctor Smollett.

JAMES THOMSON,
Author of The Seasons, *and other excellent Poems,*
Which promote
Piety, Patriotism, Benevolence, and the Love of Nature,
Wherever the English Tongue is understood,
Was born in this Village, 11th September, 1700.
Died 27th August, 1748.
And is buried in the Church of Richmond in Surrey.

To do honour to the Place of his Birth,
And as a Testimony of Veneration
For so amiable a Poet,
And so illustrious a Kinsman,
This monument† is erected
By his Nephew, James Craig, Architect.

"I would have no quotations or verses on the monument; and I beg leave to say, that the four which you have taken from the epilogue, are not so very elegant in the expression as might be wished, though the meaning is good, and perfectly true.

"I beg my best respects to Sir William Forbes, to whom I will write soon, but cannot at present; as he will see this letter, I consider myself as writing to you both. I am much obliged to you for giving me so candidly your opinion of my two psalms. It has de-

* Who these were, does not appear. † Or pillar.

termined me to lay aside all thoughts of a project, which, though my health forbade me to undertake it, had been too much in my head of late. For I see now, that my plan, even though executed to my mind, would not please those whom I most wished to please, who best deserved to be pleased, and who, from their partiality to me, would not be easily displeased with any work of mine. I am not sure whether I shall ever publish the letter to Dr Blair, unless I were to make some additions to it, to justify the preference which I give to the Assembly's metre Psalms;* I mean to their plan, for the execution has all the faults that Sir William Forbes mentions. In England, they commonly make use of a corrected edition of Sternhold and Hopkins; and I confess I must agree with them so far, as to think *that* rudeness, which is the effect of simplicity, more pardonable, than those finical embellishments that are owing to affectation. But I cannot at present enter upon the reasons that would determine me to reject all paraphrastical additions and flowery ornaments in a version of the Psalms, and adhere to that manly (I ought to have said *divine*) and most expressive simplicity, which characterize the original."†

LETTER CXXIII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 22d November, 1778.

"DURING this long confinement, I have often been forced to have recourse to my pen and ink, in order to forget my anxiety for a few minutes. But though I could transcribe and correct a little, I was in a very bad state for composition. However, since March last, I have written in a fair hand about 370 pages. In this collection there are (besides other matters) three essays, on "Me-

* That version authorized by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

† See what he himself has said on this subject, in Letter II. p. 39.

mory," on "Imagination," and on "Dreaming," on which I set some value. I shall read them to my class very soon; they will make about ten lectures, of an hour each. In treating of Memory and Imagination, I have endeavoured, not only to ascertain their phenomena and laws, but also to propose rules for improving the former faculty, and for regulating the latter. The view I have taken of Dreaming is new, so far as I know. I have attempted to trace up some of the appearances of that mysterious mode of perception to their proximate causes; and to prove, that it is in many respects useful to the human constitution. On all subjects of this nature, I have constantly received more information from my own experience than from books.

"One of the next faculties that come in my way is Conscience, or the moral faculty; on which I have in writing a great number of unfinished observations. If I live to finish what I intend on this subject, I shall probably attempt a confutation of several erroneous principles that have been adopted by modern writers of morals, but without naming any names; and it is not unlikely, that I may interweave the substance of what I wrote long ago, at greater length, on the unchangeableness of Moral Truth. But winter will be over before I can seriously set about it; and perhaps the state of my health may oblige me to drop the scheme altogether. However, I do not repent what I have hitherto done, in transcribing and correcting my lectures; for I have been careful to make it an amusement rather than a task; whence I have reason to think, that my health has not been injured by it.

"I have been reading lately a most extraordinary work, which I did read once before, but (I know not how) had totally forgotten. The "History of Benvenuto Cellini," a Florentine goldsmith and designer, translated from the Italian by Thomas Nugent. There is something in it so singularly characteristical, that it is impossible to reject the whole as fabulous, and yet it is equally impossible not to reject a great part of it as such. To reconcile this, I would suppose, what the work itself strongly evinces, that the author must have been an ingenious, hot-headed, vain, audacious man; and that the violence of his passions, the strength of his superstition, and the disasters into which he plunged himself, made him mad in the end. We know that the Italians of the 16th century were very ingenious in every thing that relates to drawing and designing; but it cannot

be believed, that Popes, Emperors, and Kings, were so totally engrossed with those matters as Signior Cellini represents them. If you have never seen the book, I would recommend it as a curiosity, from which I promise that you will receive amusement. Nay, in regard to the manners of those times, there is even some instruction in it."

LETTER CXXIV.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUTCHESS OF GORDON.*

Aberdeen, 10th January, 1779.

"MAJOR MERCER made me very happy with the news he brought from Gordon-Castle, particularly when he assured me that your Grace was in perfect health. He told me too, that your solitude was at an end for some time; which, I confess, I was not sorry to hear. Seasons of recollection may be useful; but when one begins to find pleasure in sighing over Young's "Night Thoughts" in a corner, it is time to shut the book, and return to the company. I grant, that, while the mind is in a certain state, those gloomy ideas give exquisite delight; but their effect resembles that of in-

* Jane, Dutchess of Gordon, daughter of Sir William Maxwell of Monreith, Baronet, in the county of Wigton, in Scotland. Her Grace, the honour of whose intimate acquaintance I have long had the happiness to enjoy, distinguished Dr Beattie, during many years, by her friendship and correspondence, which were returned on his part by every respectful sentiment of esteem and admiration. While he was charmed by her beauty, the brilliancy of her wit, and her cultivated understanding, the Dutchess of Gordon well knew how to appreciate the talents and the virtues of Dr Beattie; and these letters, selected from a great number, during a long epistolary intercourse, strongly evince the warmth of his gratitude for her unremitting kindness and attention on every occasion. Indeed, so tenderly solicitous was the Dutchess of Gordon at all times to sooth his sorrows, and dissipate those gloomy ideas that preyed upon his mind, that he found consolation and relief in the free interchange of thoughts with which her good nature delighted to indulge him: And he has often been heard to say, that he was never more happy than in the society he found at Gordon-Castle.

toxication upon the body; they may produce a temporary fit of feverish exultation, but qualms, and weakened nerves, and depression of spirits, are the consequence. I have great respect for Dr Young, both as a man and as a poet; I used to devour his "Night Thoughts" with a satisfaction not unlike that which, in my younger years, I have found in walking alone in a church-yard, or in a wild mountain, by the light of the moon, at midnight. Such things may help to soften a rugged mind; and I believe I might have been the better for them. But your Grace's heart is already "too feelingly alive to each fine impulse;" and, therefore, to you I would recommend gay thoughts, cheerful books, and sprightly company: I might have said *company* without any limitation, for wherever you are, the company must be sprightly. Excuse this obtrusion of advice. We are all physicians who have arrived at forty; and as I have been studying the anatomy of the human mind these fifteen years and upwards, I think I ought to be something of a soul-doctor by this time.

"When I first read Young, my heart was broken to think of the poor man's afflictions. Afterwards, I took it into my head, that where there was so much lamentation there could not be excessive suffering; and I could not help applying to him sometimes those lines of a song,

> "Believe me, the shepherd but feigns;
> "He's wretched, to show he has wit."

On talking with some of Dr Young's particular friends in England, I have since found that my conjecture was right; for that, while he was composing the "Night Thoughts," he was really as cheerful as any other man.

"I well know the effect of what your Grace expresses so properly, of a cold *yes* returned to a warm sentiment. One meets with it often in company; and, in most companies with nothing else. And yet it is perhaps no great loss, upon the whole, that one's enthusiasm does not always meet with an adequate return. A disappointment of this sort, now and then, may have upon the mind an effect something like that of the cold bath upon the body; it gives a temporary shock, but is followed by a very delightful glow as soon as one gets into a society of the right temperature.

They resemble too in another respect. A cool companion may be disagreeable at first, but in a little time he becomes less so; and at our first plunge we are impatient to get out of the bath, but if we stay in it a minute or two, we lose the sense of its extreme coldness. Would not your Grace think, from what I am saying, or rather preaching, that I was the most social man upon earth? And yet I am become almost an hermit: I have not made four visits these four months. Not that I am running away, or have any design to run away, from the world. It is, I rather think, the world that is running away from me.

"No character was ever more fully, or more concisely drawn, than that of Major Mercer* by your Grace. I was certain you would like him the more, the longer you knew him. With more learning than any other man of my acquaintance, he has all the playfulness of a school-boy; and unites the wit and the wisdom of Montesquieu, with the sensibility of Rousseau, and the generosity of Tom Jones. Your Grace has likewise a very just idea of Mrs Mercer.† She is most amiable, and well accomplished; and, in goodness and generosity of nature, is not inferior even to the Major himself. I met her the other day, and was happy to find her in better health than I think she has been for some years. This will be most welcome news to the Major. Pray, does your Grace think that he blames me for not writing to him this great while? The true reason is, that I have not had this great while any news to send him, but what I knew would give him pain; and therefore I thought it better not to write, especially as we have been in daily expectation of seeing him here these several weeks. Will your Grace take the trouble to tell him this? There is no man to whom I have been so much obliged; and, with one or two exceptions, there is no man or woman whom I love so well."

* See p. 20. and Appendix, [BB.] He was at that time Major of the Duke of Gordon's regiment.

† Mrs Mercer was sister of Lord Glenbervie. She died January, 1802. See Appendix, [R.]

LETTER CXXV.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 18th January, 1779.

"YOU are right in your conjecture, that a metrical version of the Psalms, formed upon that plan of severe simplicity which I recommend, would be a very difficult work. There is a great deal of cant in the style of poetry, especially of modern poetry: A set of epithets, and figures, and phrases, which a certain set of versifiers bring in upon all occasions, in order to make out their verses, and prepare their rhymes. If a poet has got a good stock of these, and a knack of applying them, and is not very solicitous about energy, consistency, or truth of sentiment, he may write verses with great ease and rapidity; but such verses are not read above once or twice, and are seldom or never remembered. Their tawdry and unnecessary ornaments make them as unwieldy to the memory, as a herald's coat is to the body. Besides, where language is much ornamented, there is always a deficiency in clearness, as well as in force; and though it may please at its first appearance, it rarely continues long in fashion. The favourite authors in every language are the simplest. They have nothing but what is *necessary* or *useful*; and such things are always in request. My reasons, therefore, for recommending a very simple metrical version of the Psalms, are chiefly these: 1st, Such a version will approach more nearly than an ornamental one to the style of the original; which, I think, will be allowed to be an advantage. 2d, It will be better understood by the common people; for when poetical language is set off with many ornaments, it must be in a great measure unintelligible to unlearned readers. 3d, It will continue intelligible and in fashion for a much longer time; for such is the natural and necessary effect of elegant plainness. 4th, It will take a faster hold of the memory. One of my reasons for tolerating a metrical ver-

sion of the Psalms is, that it makes them more easily remembered. And Horace, when speaking on a subject not unlike this, has very well observed,

" Omne supervacuum pleno de pectore manat :"

Superfluities of style perish from the memory like water poured into a vessel that is already full. 5th, The simplicity I contend for requires a concise expression, and consequently conveys much meaning in few words; and this is particularly necessary in words intended to be sung with understanding. For singing is of necessity (or at least ought to be) slower than speaking; and, therefore, if the matter is not very close, it will happen sometimes that the singer shall be sounding notes to which his mind annexes no definite idea. One of my objections to Merrick's Psalms would be, if they are all like the specimen you favoured me with, their unnecessary and paraphrastical diffuseness. His first psalm consists of thirty-four lines; and yet I am certain, that the whole meaning of that psalm might, with equal harmony, with equal elegance, and with superior clearness, be expressed in twenty-four. Tate and Brady's second psalm consists of forty-eight lines, and my version of that psalm of thirty-six; if the two versions be in all other respects *only equal*, I believe that which has fewest words would be thought the better. The last reason I shall assign is, that the modish tricks and ornaments of verse appear to me not very graceful in serious poetry of any sort; but in sacred poetry I consider them as worse than ungraceful, as even *indecent*. A high-priest of the Jews, officiating at the altar in ruffles and a laced waistcoat, or a clergyman in the pulpit, with the airs and dress of a player, are incongruities of the same kind with these, which, in a poetical version of the Psalms, ought to be avoided. Is it right, think you, for a Christian on Sunday, in the church, to sing,

" His rains from heaven parched hills recruit,
" That soon transmit the liquid store;
" 'Till earth is burthened with her fruit,
" And Nature's lap can hold no more ?"

The harshness of the first line, and the half nonsense of the first couplet, might be excused; but what shall we say to the Pagan allusion in the last line ?

"After what you know of my mind on this subject, I am sure I need not say that it is far from my purpose to recommend a rude or clownish simplicity, whereof I confess that there are innumerable instances in the version that is in most common use in Scotland; and yet, in the present case, rusticity is better than finicalness. I would rather see in the pulpit a sun-burnt face, than a painted one; and a coat out at elbows, than one overlaid with embroidery. The middle way, you will say, is best; and I allow it: And, between ourselves, I think it peculiarly honourable to the church of England, that, while she keeps at a distance from the pageantries of the Romish church, she also avoids that ritual, which might do very well with pure spirits, but which is too apt to produce listlessness and coldness in creatures weighed down with flesh and blood. I would have every thing neat and plain, and as elegant as is consistent with plainness, in the public services and in the language of religion: or, if now and then I were to introduce a little pomp, which I believe I should often be inclined to do, I would still make it simple and plain; which, if I mistake not, would heighten its magnificence, and give permanency to its effects. Elegant and pure simplicity is the characteristic of the true pulpit-style, as it is now established by the best models, both ancient and modern; the same thing holds true of the prayers of the church of England; only these have (what they ought to have) something of a more elaborate and more dignified composition, than becomes the sermon.

"I know not whether there be any thing new in my papers on the "Origin of Evil," and the "Evidences of Christianity." It will be a considerable time before I get forward to those subjects. At present I confine myself to such as are most amusing, and withal least connected with those topics which formerly engrossed me to a degree that ruined my health. How much my mind has been injured by certain speculations, you will partly guess, when I tell you a fact, that is now unknown to all the world,—that since the "Essay "on Truth" was printed in quarto in the summer of 1776, I have never *dared* to read it over. I durst not even read the sheets, to see whether there were any errors in the print, and was obliged to get a friend to do that office for me. Not that I am in the least dissatisfied with the sentiments: every word of my own doctrine I do seriously believe; nor have I ever seen any objections to it which I could not easily answer. But the habit of anticipating and obviat-

ing arguments, upon an abstruse and interesting subject, came in time to have dreadful effects upon my nervous system; and I cannot read what I then wrote, without some degree of horror, because it recals to my mind the horrors that I have sometimes felt, after passing a long evening in those severe studies. You will perhaps understand me better, when I have told you a short story. One who was on board the Centurion, in Lord Anson's voyage, having got some money in that expedition, purchased a small estate, about three miles from this town. I have had several conversations with him, on the subject of the voyage, and once asked him, whether he had ever read the history of it. He told me he had read all the history, except the description of their sufferings during the run from *Cape Horn* to *Juan Fernandez*, which, he said, were so great, that he durst not recollect or think of them."

LETTER CXXVI.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. DR LAING.

Aberdeen, 31st January, 1779.

"I LATELY met with what I consider as a great curiosity in the musical way. Take the history as follows: Mary, the consort of King William, was a great admirer of a certain Scots tune, which in England they call *Cold and Raw*, but which in Scotland is better known by the name of *Up in the Morning early*. One day at her private concert, where Purcel presided, the Queen interrupted the music, by desiring one Mrs Hunt, who was present, to sing the ballad of *Cold and Raw*. The lady sung it; and it is said, that Purcel was a little piqued at being obliged to sit idle at his harpsichord, and having his own compositions interrupted for the sake of such a trifle. The Queen's birth-day was soon after, when Purcel, who composed the court music for that solemnity, in order either to please the Queen, or to surprise her, or merely to indulge his own humour, made *Cold and Raw* the bass of one of the songs. This anecdote I met with some months ago; and my author added, that this individual song was printed in Purcel's "*Orpheus Britannicus*."

I had a great desire to see this song, that I might know how such a genius would acquit himself when confined in such trammels. I confess, for all my high opinion of Purcel, I did not expect that a song composed on such a plan could be a good one; but I am agreeably disappointed. The song, or hymn, (for it is in the church style) is, in my opinion, excellent. I inclose a copy of it, that you may judge for yourself. It will not perhaps strike you at first, but when you have gone over it five or six times, you will like it much. There is something of a very original cast in the composition."

LETTER CXXVII.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 1st February, 1779.

"I SINCERELY sympathize with you on the death of Mr Garrick.* I know not how his friends in London will be able to bear the loss of him, for he was the most delightful companion in the world. On the stage nobody could admire him more than I did; and yet, I am not sure whether I did not admire him still more in private company. What a splendid career he has run! idolized as he has been by the public, as well as by his friends, for almost half a century: happy in his fortune and in his family,† superior to envy, invulnerable by detraction: and yet nobody, who knew him will say that his good fortune was greater than his merit.

"I have just received the *Notes* on Potter's "Eschylus," by which I am happy to find, that my opinion of that translation is ratified by your's. I did not think it possible to do justice to the old Grecian in any modern tongue; but Mr Potter has satisfied me, that I was mistaken. It seems to me, that this is indisputably the best translation that ever appeared in English of any Greek poet. I beg, Madam, you will exert all your influence with the author, to make him go on with "Euripides."

* For some further account of this great actor, see the Appendix, [CC.]

† Mr Garrick was married, but never had any children.

LETTER CXXVIII.

MRS MONTAGU TO DR BEATTIE.

Hill-street, 10th February, 1779.

"I ADMIRE your perseverance in your college duties and literary labours, in the midst of so many discouragements as want of health and domestic anxiety bring with them. I rejoice in that perseverance, which will give to the world and me the means of so much instruction and pleasure. You do well in collecting and fitting for publication what you have already written. My learned and excellent friend, Mr Stillingfleet, by daily enlarging his lucubrations, and not putting the finishing hand to any, condemned to the flames, at his death, (which did not happen till he was near seventy) many valuable manuscripts.

"You would read, with melancholy pleasure, the honours done to Mr Garrick's remains, and the tender regret expressed for his loss. He seemed to quit the theatre of the world as he did that at Drury-lane, before any of the energy, any of the graces, with which he was wont to enspirit or adorn the part he was to act, were enfeebled or faded. In full possession of our admiration, in perfect dominion of our affections, and command of our sympathies, he quitted us: No wonder we wept at the catastrophe! As he grew disengaged from the theatrical character, he grew more absolute and excellent in the charms of the private. He gave the highest spirit to conversation; the highest joy and mirth at the convivial board. The literary men considered him as one, who, by a kind of intuition, possessed all they valued in themselves, and had a closer intellectual correspondence with them than any other man. So universal an actor must be considered rather as a general connoisseur of the human mind in all situations, than as one by profession a mimic of it.

"Mr Garrick, in his own character, was highly respectable. His friends have a great loss, the distressed and poor have a great loss, his wife the greatest; I think I never saw such perfect affec.

tion and harmony as subsisted between them. No words can paint her woe; and it would be difficult to do justice to the piety, resignation, and dignity of her behaviour on this sad occasion.

"I was much pleased with your pamphlet on "Psalmody," and I cannot think it possible it should give offence. I think psalms, written with great and noble simplicity, and sung in the same manner, friendly to devotion; and it is almost an offence to call in the aid of insensible and inanimate things to praise the Giver of life and reason. A psalm, decently sung by the congregation, always excites my devotion more than the organ. I would employ musical instruments in a Pagan temple, but only the voice of man in a Christian church.

"I am very glad you are so pleased with Mr Potter's "Eschylus." I shall communicate to him what you have said; and praise like yours will excite him to proceed with his translation of "Euripides." Poor man, he has lately met with great domestic afflictions! It seems to me, that he is a man of great genius and learning.

"My letters from Paris tell me, that, since the death of Voltaire, freethinking seems less fashionable. At Paris every thing is governed by fashion; I wish it may be *a-la-mode* to endeavour to go to heaven."

LETTER CXXIX.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUTCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 22d February, 1779.

"MY friends in England are all in tears for poor Garrick. In his own sphere he was certainly the greatest man of his time; and since I knew him, I have always thought, that in private company his talents were not less admirable than upon the stage. There was a playfulness in his humour, and a solidity in his judgment, which made him at once a most delightful and most instructive associate. After passing part of two days with him at his house at Hampton, I once intended to have addressed to him a copy of verses, in which I had actually made some progress; but something interposed to

prevent me. The thought, as I remember, was to this purpose: That in him the soul of Shakespeare had revived, after undergoing in the other world a purification of one hundred years; for that was the exact space of time between the death of Shakespeare and the birth of Garrick. Kindred spirits they certainly were. Shakespeare was never thoroughly understood till Garrick explained him. Both were equally great in tragedy and in comedy; and yet for comedy both had evidently a predilection."

LETTER CXXX.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 10th April, 1779.

"I HAVE at last made good my promise, in regard to the Scotticisms; and send you inclosed a little book, containing about two hundred, with a praxis at the end, which will perhaps amuse you. I printed it for no other purpose but to give away to the young men who attend my lectures. This collection I have been making from time to time for some years past. I consulted Mr Hume's list, and took a few from it. Mr Elphinston's book I also looked into, (that book I mean which he wrote either for or against Lord Kaimes) and it supplied me with three or four: But Elphinston is mistaken in many things, and his own style is not free from Scotticism; which, however, is one of his least faults; for so affected and enigmatical is his phraseology, that he cannot be said to have a style at all. Dr Campbell gave me about a dozen. The rest are the result of my own observation. I shall in time, I believe, collect as many more as will be a supplement to this pamphlet; for they are endless. Even since these came from the press, I have recollected a few others, which you will find in the postscript. I am not positive that every one of my remarks are right; but I intend to send them to a learned friend in England, who will correct what is amiss. If any material amendment is made, I shall inform you of it.

"Your opinion of Bishop Lowth's "Isaiah" coincides exactly with mine. It is equal to my highest expectations, and does honour to our age and nation. I wish the learned prelate may proceed in his pious undertaking, and give us as many of the other books of Scripture as his other duties will leave him at leisure to revise. I made two or three trifling remarks on the language of his translation, in which there are some peculiarities that I cannot account for. To *hist*, (meaning to call with a whistle) is a word which I never before met with either in print or in conversation, and which indeed I should not have understood, if the author had not explained it in his notes; I suspect it may be provincial. *Ilex*, too, and *cyon*, are a sort of technical words, the one belonging to botany, the other to gardening; and, as such, ought not, I think, to have a place in a popular translation of Scripture. It is a striking beauty in our English Bible, that, though the language is always elegant and nervous, and for the most part very harmonious, the words are all plain and common; no affectation of learned terms, or of words of Greek or Latin etymology. I have sometimes amused myself with the simplicity and harmony of particular passages. Nothing can be more melodious than the following, which yet seems to be the effect of accident rather than of art: "Man that is born of a "woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth as a "flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and con-"tinueth not." Virgil himself would not versify the following passage, for fear of hurting its harmony; and yet every word is common, and there is not the least appearance of art in the composition: "My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, "my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain "is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of "the singing of birds is come; and the voice of the turtle is heard "in our land. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the "vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, "my fair one, and come away." Our critics have often affirmed, that the English tongue derives a great deal of its harshness from the multitude of its monosyllables: this passage may serve for a proof of the contrary; for here (if I reckon right) are eighty words, whereof sixty-eight are monosyllables; and yet I will venture to say, that the Italian language itself is not susceptible of greater sweetness. Some of our words of one syllable are certainly harsh,

as *which*, *such*, *scratch*, &c; but even these lose a great part of their disagreeable sound, when the words that come before and after them are properly modulated.

"You would hear, no doubt, of the death of Mr Riddoch, one of the ministers of our English chapel. As I think I have heard you say, that you liked those few sermons which he published some years ago,* I shall take the liberty to inform you, that his widow, whom he has left in very poor circumstances, intends to publish two volumes of his sermons by subscription, and has asked that Dr Campbell and I would revise the manuscripts; which, considering her distress, and his merit both as a man and as a preacher, we did not decline."

LETTER CXXXI.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUTCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 27th May, 1779.

"I REJOICE in the good weather, in the belief that it extends to Glenfiddich;† where I pray that your Grace may enjoy all the health and happiness that good air, goats' whey, romantic solitude, and the society of the loveliest children in the world, can bestow. May your days be clear sunshine, and may a gentle rain give balm to your nights, that the flowers and birch-trees may salute you in the morning with all their fragrance. May the kids frisk and play

* Six occasional Sermons on important subjects, by James Riddoch, A. M. one of the ministers of St Paul's chapel, Aberdeen, published in 1762. The two first, preached on New-year's day, are peculiarly excellent. Those alluded to here, which Dr Beattie and Dr Campbell had the goodness to revise previous to their publication, were printed in the year 1782. They are plain, pious, practical, and useful discourses, which may be perused with advantage. As his manner in the pulpit was extremely energetic, they were listened to by his congregation with much delight.

† A hunting-seat of the Duke of Gordon's in the heart of the Grampian mountains; a wild, but beautiful, sequestered spot, of which Dr Beattie was peculiarly fond.

tricks before you, with unusual sprightliness; and may the song of birds, the hum of bees, and the distant water-fall, with now and then the shepherd's horn resounding from the mountains, entertain you with a full chorus of Highland music.

"My imagination had parcelled out the lovely glen into a thousand little paradises; in the hope of being there, and seeing every day in that solitude, what is

> "Fairer than famed of old, or fabled since,
> "Of fairy damsels, met in forest wide
> "By errant knights."

But the information you received at Cluny gave a check to my fancy, and was indeed a great disappointment to Mrs Beattie and me; not on account of the goats' whey, but because it keeps us so long at such a distance from your Grace."

LETTER CXXXII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 12th June, 1779.

"YOU are extremely welcome to as many copies of the Scotticisms as you please; I shall send a parcel by the first opportunity. But I would not wish the pamphlet to be exposed to the censure of critics, who know not the peculiar circumstances of the persons for whose use it was intended. I printed it for the improvement of those young men only, who attend my lectures; who are generally of the north country, and many of whom have had no opportunity of learning English from the company they kept. To have confined myself, therefore, to such idioms as may actually be found in printed books, or to such as are current to the south as well as the north of Scotland, would not have answered my purpose. There are in the list, as you justly observe, some phrases, which are not often heard among the better sort of our people; but in this country they are in fact used by many above the rank of the

vulgar, and are sometimes mistaken for English, because they may be seen in English books, though in a different sense: such is *misguide* for *sully*, ill to *guide* for ill to *manage*, &c. *Wrongous* and *iniquous* are very common among Scottish lawyers. In a word, I might no doubt have omitted several of those that are inserted; and would probably have done so, if I had not known by experience, that phrase-books, vocabularies, and dictionaries, are oftener faulty from defect than from redundancy.

"Negatives are hard to prove, especially in language. A good phrase is established by a quotation from a good author: but to say of a phrase, that it is a Scottish idiom, is to say, that, though used in Scotland, it occurs not in any English writer of classical authority; a point, which in many cases, it will be no easy matter to evince. There may be errors, therefore, in my pamphlet; it would be strange indeed if there were none; but it may have its use for all that. Old Dr * * * * * * * used to tell me, that he formerly belonged to a club in Edinburgh where nothing but Latin was spoken; and that when appeals were made to Mr Ruddiman,* (who was a sort of oracle among them) he would give his opinion very readily and decisively, when he thought the Latin good; but was slow to pronounce concerning any phrases which had the appearance of Latin, that they were bad. And I remember, that Walker, in his excellent "Treatise on English Particles," makes a remark to the same purpose, and gives a list of Latin phrases from the best authors, which one, who was not well read in the classics, would, without hesitation, pronounce to be Anglicisms."

LETTER CXXXIII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 17th June, 1779.

"I HAVE been reading Johnson's prefaces to the English edition of the poets, which poor Dilly sent me in exchange for the Edinburgh edition. There are many excellent things in the pre-

* The celebrated grammarian.

faces, particularly in the lives of Milton, Dryden and Waller. He is more civil to Milton than I expected, though he hates him for his blank verse and his politics. To the forced and unnatural conceits of Cowley, I think he is too favourable; and I heartily wish, that, instead of the poems of this poet, which are printed at full length, and fill two large volumes, he had given us the "Fairy Queen" of Spenser, which is left out, very absurdly, I think. He has brought his lives no further down than to Hughes; but I hear he intends to give the remainder as soon as he can."

LETTER CXXXIV.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUTCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 23d June, 1779.

"I CONGRATULATE your Grace, with all my heart, on the safe arrival of one of the best and most beautiful boys that ever was born.* It gave me the most sincere pleasure to see him so well, so mindful of all his old frends, and so impatient to get forward to the Glen.†

"And here your Grace will pardon me for expressing a wish, that the Marquis were attended by a man of learning, in quality of tutor, as well as by Mr S * * * * * * *, who is, to be sure, in every respect but one, the best man in the world for his purpose. Many an English clergyman would, with transport, resign his cure, in order to undertake so pleasing an employment: And I think the tutor ought by all means to be an Englishman, regularly educated; and to be recommended either by the Archbishop of York, or by Dr Barnard, provost of Eton, whom I look upon as the best judges now in the world of the qualifications requisite in a teacher. I beg your Grace will think of this.

"I will not attempt to describe what I suffered from the cruel necessity which compelled me to decline your Grace's invitation. My regret was such, and the cause of that regret is so great a

* The Marquis of Huntly. † Glenfiddich. See p. 307.

weight on my spirits, that I believe even Adam Smith himself,* if he were to know it, would almost pity me. Mrs Beattie has been a little better for this week past; and bids me say, that though she is obliged to give up all thoughts of the Glen for this season, she still hopes to be happy in Gordon-Castle before the end of autumn. She now goes out once a day in a chaise; but if the airing exceed two miles she is fatigued with it. I would fain hope, that when she is a little accustomed to this exercise, she may be able to undertake a little journey, which I am sure would be of infinite service to her.

"I have made several visits of late to the Den of Rubislaw,† and find a charm in it which I was never sensible of before. One evening it appeared in dreadful majesty; for it was so thick a fog, that I could hardly see the tops of the trees, or even of the cliffs; and so I was at liberty to fancy them as high and as wild as I pleased. But the more I indulge myself in that solitude, the more I regret my distance from another,‡ which I hear is admirable for the beauties of still life, and of which I know how much it excels all other solitudes for every other species of beauty. I still flatter myself with the hope of assisting, one time or other, at some of your Grace's morning lectures. Pray remember your promise of sending me the history of *a day*.

"I have a little story to tell your Grace, and a favour to ask; which will give you the trouble of another letter in a post or two."

LETTER CXXXV.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 25th June, 1779.

"AN extraordinary book has just now appeared in this country; but before I say any thing of it, I must trouble you with a short narrative.

* In allusion to Dr Smith's doctrine of *Sympathy*.

† A romantic, woody spot, in the near neighbourhood of Aberdeen; to which Dr Beattie delighted to retire, in order to indulge in silent meditation.

A *Den*, in the vernacular language of Scotland, as used in the sense here meant, is synonymous with what in England is called a *Dingle*.

‡ Glenfiddich.

"During the last years of Mr Hume's life, his friends gave out, that he regretted his having dealt so much in metaphysics, and that he never would write any more. He was at pains to disavow his "Treatise of Human Nature," in an advertisement which he published about half a year before his death. All this, with what I then heard of his bad health, made my heart relent towards him; as you would no doubt perceive by the concluding part of the preface to my quarto book. But immediately after his death, I heard, that he had left behind him two manuscripts, with strict charge that they should be published by his executors; one, the "History of "his Life," and the other, "Dialogues on Natural Religion." This last was said to be more sceptical than any of his other writings. Yet he had employed the latter part of his life in preparing it. The copy which I have, was sent me two days ago by my friend and neighbour Dr Campbell; than whom no person better understands the tendency and the futility of Mr Hume's philosophy, and who accompanied it with a note in the following words: "You "have probably not yet seen this posthumous performance of "David Hume. As the publisher, with whom I am not acquainted, "has favoured me with a copy, I have sent it to you for your pe- "rusal; and shall be glad to have your opinion of it, after you "have read it. For my part, I think it too dry, and too meta- "physical, to do much hurt; neither do I discover any thing new "or curious in it. It serves but as a sort of commentary to the "'Dialogues on Natural Religion and Providence,' published in "his life time. What most astonishes me is, the zeal which this "publication shows for disseminating those sceptical principles."*

"In my answer to Dr Campbell's note, I told him, that I was happy to find, from his account, that the book was not likely to do much harm; that I would acquiesce in his judgment of it, which I was persuaded was just; but that at present my circumstances, in regard to health and spirits, would not permit me to enter upon the study of it.

"Are you not surprised, madam, that any man should conclude his life (for Mr Hume knew he was dying) with preparing

* Dr Campbell's prediction, as to the fate of this posthumous work of Mr Hume's, seems to have been completely verified; for the "Dialogues "concerning Natural Religion" are now never heard of.

such a work for the press? Yet Mr Hume must have known, that, in the opinion of a great majority of his readers, his reasonings, in regard to God and Providence, were most pernicious, as well as most absurd. Nay, he himself seemed to think them dangerous. This appears from the following fact, which I had from Dr Gregory. Mr Hume was boasting to the doctor, that among his disciples in Edinburgh he had the honour to reckon many of the fair sex. "Now, tell me," said the doctor, "whether, if you had "a wife or a daughter, you would *wish* them to be your disciples? "Think well before you answer me; for I assure you, that, whatever "your answer is, I will not conceal it." Mr Hume, with a smile, and some hesitation, made this reply: "No; I believe scepticism "may be too sturdy a virtue for a woman." Miss Gregory* will certainly remember, that she has heard her father tell this story. How different is Doctor Gregory's "Legacy"† to Mr Hume's!

"Do me the favour, madam, to let me know that you are well; that your nephew is just such as I wish him to be; and that the Dutchess-dowager of Portland, Mrs Delany, Mrs Carter, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and our other friends, are all in good health. I never pass a day, nor (I believe) an hour of the day, without thinking of them, and wishing them all imaginable happiness. Some times I flatter myself with the hope of seeing you all once more before I die; it is a pleasing thought; but,

"Shadows, clouds, and darkness, rest upon it."

"How shall I thank you, madam, for all your goodness! your refusal to accept of any indemnification for the expence of my advertisements is a new instance. I am ashamed, and know not what to say: *Dii tibi—et mens sibi conscia recti, præmia digna ferant.*"

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* Daughter of the late Dr John Gregory,‡ who, at the date of this letter, was on a visit at Mrs Montagu's. Miss Gregory is now the wife of my respected friend, the Reverend Mr Alison.§

† Dr Gregory's elegant little posthumous work, "A Father's Legacy to "his Daughters."

‡ See Page 84. § See Page 126.

The following little artless tale, referred to in a former letter, is well told, and does credit to the goodness of Dr Beattie's heart; although, unfortunately, his endeavours to serve his old friend, I believe, proved unsuccessful.

LETTER CXXXVI.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUTCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 5th July, 1779.

"I NOW sit down to make good the threatening denounced in the conclusion of a letter, which I had the honour to write to your Grace about ten days ago. The request I am going to make I should preface with many apologies, if I did not know, that the personage to whom I address myself is too well acquainted with all the good emotions of the human heart, to blame the warmth of a school-boy attachment, and too generous to think the worse of me for wishing to assist an unfortunate friend.

"Three weeks ago, as I was scribbling in my garret, a man entered, whom at first I did not know; but, on his desiring me to look him in the face, I soon recollected an old friend, whom I had not seen, and scarcely heard of, these twenty years. He and I lodged in the same house, when we attended the school of Laurencekirk, in the year 1747. I was then about ten years old, and he about fifteen. As he took a great liking to me, he had many opportunities of obliging me; having much more knowledge of the world, as well as more bodily strength, than I. He was, besides, an ingenious mechanic, and made for me many little things: and it must not be forgotten, that he first put a violin in my hands, and gave me the only lessons in music I ever received. Four years after this period, I went to college, and he engaged in farming. But our acquaintance was renewed about five years after, when I remember he made me the confidant of a passion he had for the greatest beauty in that part of the country, whom he soon after married.

"I was very glad to see my old friend so unexpectedly; and we talked over many old stories, which, though interesting to us, would have given little pleasure to any body else. But my satisfaction was soon changed to regret, when, upon inquiring into the particulars of his fortune during these twenty years, I found he had been very unsuccessful. His farming projects had miscarried; and, happening to give some offence to a young woman, who was called the housekeeper of a gentleman on whom he depended, she swore she would be revenged, to his ruin; and was as good as her word. He satisfied his creditors, by giving them all his substance; and, retiring to a small house in Johns-haven,* made a shift to support his family by working as a joiner; a trade which, when a boy, he had picked up for his amusement. But a consumptive complaint overtook him; and though he got the better of it, he has never since been able to do any thing that requires labour, and can now only make fiddles, and some such little matters, for which there is no great demand in the place where he lives. He told me, he had come to Aberdeen on purpose to put me in mind of our old acquaintance, and see whether I could do any thing for him. I asked, in what respect he wished me to serve him. He would do any thing, he said, for his family, that was not dishonourable: and, on pressing him a little further, I found, that the height of his ambition was to be a tide-waiter, a land-waiter, or an officer of excise. I told him, it was particularly unlucky, that I had not the least influence, or even acquaintance, with any one commissioner, either of the excise or customs: but, as I did not care to discourage him, I promised to think of his case, and to do what I could. I have since seen a clergyman, who knows my friend very well, and describes his condition as still more forlorn than he had represented it.

"It is in behalf of this poor man, that I now venture to implore your Grace's advice and assistance. I am well aware, that, though his case is very interesting to me, there is nothing extraordinary in it; and that your Grace must often be solicited for others in like circumstances. It is, therefore, with the utmost reluctance, that I have taken this liberty. If your Grace thinks, that an application from me to Mr Baron Gordon might be sufficient to procure one of the offices in question for my friend, I would not wish you to

* A small fishing town in the county of Kincardine.

have my trouble; but if my application were enforced by yours, it would have a better chance to succeed. This, however, I do not request, if it is not so easy to your Grace, as to be almost a matter of indifference.

"By the first convenient opportunity I hope to send your Grace a sort of curiosity,—four elegant Pastorals, by a Quaker;—not one of our Quakers of Scotland, but a true English Quaker, who says *thee* and *thou*, and comes into a room, and sits down in company, without taking off his hat. For all this, he is a very worthy man, an elegant scholar, a cheerful companion, and a particular friend of mine. His name is John Scott of Amwell, near Ware, Hertfordshire, where he lives in an elegant retirement, (for his fortune is very good); and has dug in a chalk-hill, near his house, one of the most curious grottos I have ever seen. As it is only twenty miles from London, I would recommend it to your Grace, when you are there, as worth going to visit. Your Grace will be pleased with his Pastorals, not only on account of their morality and sweet versification, but also for their images and descriptions, which are a very exact picture of the groves, woods, waters, and windmills, of that part of England where he resides."

LETTER CXXXVII.

MRS MONTAGU TO DR BEATTIE.

Sandleford, 20th July, 1779.

"I ALWAYS consider your letters as a favour; and when they brought a good account of your and Mrs Beattie's health, they gave me the highest pleasure. I can only say, that with your last I felt the most sincere and tender sympathy, and daily pour forth the warmest wishes for her speedy recovery.

"I will now give you some account of myself: I went to Bath the middle of April, and, with great benefit to my health, drank the waters above six weeks. A winter season in London, and a spring season at Bath, bring on a weariness of the bustle of society; and I was glad to pass the month of June in the sober, cheerful tranquillity of Sandleford. But in this working-day-world one can

have but few holidays; the house I am building, and an estate I am purchasing, created many occasions for my going to London; to the busy world, therefore, business brought me back, and from thence I am but just returned to peace, and sunshine, and the rural joys of July. The animated scene of hay-making is very delightful to me; and I passed my mornings in the grove, to contemplate the gay labour of the hay-makers, who, to the number of forty, of different ages and sexes, were all busy in the field below me. The men were gay, the women chattering, and the boys and girls sporting and playing amidst their work; so that labour seemed rather a brisk exertion than a painful task. The reapers' employment is more serious and more laborious, as if, the nearer the approach to wealth, the less gay the condition; their wages are greater than those of the hay-makers, but the occupation is not so delightful, nor performed with such careless ease; and is it not the same in the business of civil life? At this juncture, particularly, I think the highest offices in our state must be the most laborious, and full of seriousness and care. Public danger used to beget public union; but I am sorry to say, that our leaders of faction have not seemed to forget their private objects for the general interest. This summer will probably bring very important events to England. Daily rumours of invasion, in some part or other of our country, seem very alarming to ears, unaccustomed to such reports; but if the chastisements of Heaven will restore those virtues, which prosperity seems to have impaired, such corrections must be reckoned amongst the favours of Providence. Resignation to Divine Wisdom and Omnipotence becomes creatures, not only weak, but blind; so I endeavour to keep my mind in tranquillity.

"I am very glad you were pleased with Mr Potter's "Æschylus." I think he has made a great addition to the English literature. At my request he has since added some notes, which I will send you if you have not got them. He is very cautious in explaining ancient mythology; I wished he had given his conjectures on the allegory of Prometheus. Mr Potter is now translating "Euripides;" and, if he succeed as well as in the other translation, the world will owe him a great deal; and I heartily wish, that, in some shape, it would pay him part of the debt; he is a man of great merit, small preferment and large

family. I hear of few new works to come forth; in the din of arms, not only the laws but the muses are silent.

"I cannot conclude my letter, without exhorting you to collect together those things you have written for the young people who attend your lectures. I am convinced they would be useful to the world, and much approved by it, if you would publish them. In all your essays there is much to be learnt; observations and deductions perfectly new, and at the same time just. With such conditions, I account essays to be pleasant and profitable; but most essay-writers give mere common-place observations, and a great deal of trite matter."

LETTER CXXXVIII.

DR BEATTIE TO MAJOR MERCER.

Aberdeen, 1st October, 1779.

"I BETOOK myself to the reading of Cæsar when I was at Peterhead, for I happened to have no other book. I had forgot a great deal of him; and scarce remembered any thing more than the opinion which I formed of his style about twenty-five years ago. But when I began, I found it almost impossible to leave off. There is nothing in the historical style more perfect; and his transactions are a complete contrast to the military affairs of these times. I know not which of his talents I should most admire: his indefatigable activity and perseverance; his intrepidity and presence of mind, which never fail him even for a moment; his address as a politician; his ability as a commander, in which he seems to me to have no equal; or the beauty, brevity, clearness, and modesty, of his narrative. I understand all his battles as well as if I had seen them: and, in half a sentence, he explains to me the grounds and occasions of a war, more fully than a modern historian could do in fifty pages of narrative, and as many more of dissertation. In a word, as the world at that time stood in need of an absolute sovereign, I am clearly of opinion, that he should have been the person. Pompey was a vain coxcomb, who, because a wrong-headed faction

had given him the title of *Magnus*, foolishly thought himself the greatest of men; Cassius was a malecontent, and a mere demagogue; and Brutus was the dupe of a surly philosophy, operating upon an easy temper. I ask pardon for troubling you with this, which you understand so much better than I do: but I am quite full of Cæsar at present; and you know, "what is nearest the "heart is nearest the mouth."

LETTER CXXXIX.

DR BEATTIE TO DR PORTEUS, BISHOP OF CHESTER.

Aberdeen, 17th December, 1779.

"ABOUT three months ago, a lady, who is a great admirer of Bishop Butler, put into my hands a manuscript-charge of that excellent prelate to the clergy of the diocese of Durham. If it is not in his printed works, I doubt whether it was ever published; but no person, who is acquainted with Butler's manner, could read half a page without being satisfied that it is genuine. I was so well pleased with it, that I had thoughts of printing it in a small pamphlet; but domestic troubles have so disconcerted me, that I am hardly capable of any thing. If your Lordship is curious to see it, I believe I could easily procure a MS. copy. Let me again make it my request, that you would collect all your printed pieces, and give them to the world in one publication.

"I think I told your Lordship in my last, that in order to keep my mind from preying upon itself, and to give it a sufficiency of such employment as would amuse the fancy, without affecting the heart, I had resolved to finish a grammatical treatise, which I began some considerable time ago. It is now finished, and makes one of my largest treatises. It consists of two parts; the first, "On the "Origin and General Nature of Speech;" the second, "On Uni-"versal Grammar." I have drawn a good deal of information from Mr Harris's "Hermes," and Lord Monboddo on "Language;" but my plan and my sentiments differ in many particulars from

both. Monboddo's partiality to the Epicurean hypothesis of the origin of language and society,

"Cum prorepserunt primis animalia terris," &c.

I thought it incumbent upon me to animadvert upon; and I hope I have shown that it is ill founded.

"I have never seen Lord Monboddo's "Ancient Metaphysics." He and I have long been particularly acquainted. Formerly we used to disagree a little on the subject of religion; but I hear he has become more cautious on that head. He carries his admiration of Aristotle, and the abstruser parts of the Greek philosophy, to a degree of extravagance that is hardly credible. Herodotus is his favourite historian; and so far is he from thinking, with the rest of the world, that he is credulous, that he seems to think him infallible in all matters which he says he had an opportunity of inquiring into. He believes in the existence of satyrs, and men with the heads of dogs, and other Egyptian monsters: and he and I have had many a controversy concerning men with tails, whom he firmly believes to exist, not only in the islands of Nicobar in the Gulf of Bengal, but even in this country. He holds, that men are naturally cannibals; from which he infers, that man is not by nature a social animal. The Lacedemonian government and discipline he admires beyond that of all other nations. Whether he justifies their conduct towards the Helots, I do not remember; but I have heard him seriously maintain, that slavery is the state that is most proper for peasants, and that they and the cattle ought to be annexed to the soil, and bought and sold along with it. He considers Horace as a philosopher, and Virgil as a good poet: but his opinion of Latin literature is but low at best; for I have heard him say, that, if we except the Roman law, there is hardly any thing in the Latin tongue that merits preservation.

"Notwithstanding these strange peculiarities of opinion, some of which are the objects of laughter rather than censure, Lord Monboddo is an honest, worthy, and friendly man, indulgent to his servants, and kind to his tenants; an elegant speaker, agreeable and jocose in conversation, and perfectly well bred. Mr Harris's "Hermes" first set him upon studying the Greek; and it unluckily directed him to the most insignificant part of ancient learning,

"The Analytics and Metaphysics" of Aristotle; which he has studied so long, that I believe he is now seriously of opinion, that nothing else deserves to be studied."

There is something extremely affecting in the tender solicitude which, in the following letter, Dr Beattie expresses concerning the education and future fortunes of his sons, at a time when he apprehended that he had not long to live. Little did he then suspect that he would have the misfortune to survive them both.

LETTER CXL.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 18th January, 1780.

"IN my present condition, it is natural for me to think what is likely to befal my family, when I leave it. The affairs I have to settle are not extensive or complex: I have taken the liberty to give you some concern in them.

"About a month ago, I executed a deed, with all the necessary formalities; in which I named you, my dear sir, with some other friends, tutors and curators for my two boys. I ought, no doubt, to have informed you of this sooner; but I know you will excuse me. This deed I consider as the most, and indeed as the only, material part of my settlements. It is scarce necessary for one to make a will, who wishes his children to be on an equal footing, in regard to inheritance; and whose property consists chiefly in a little money and some moveables. I hope I shall leave them what may keep them from being a burden on any body, and what, with strict economy, may afford them the means of an education somewhat better than I received myself. Friends may be necessary to help them forward a little in the world; and I trust in Providence, that those will not be wanting. Will you indulge me in the freedom of saying a word or two more on this subject?

"My first wish, in regard to my two boys, is, that they may be good Christians, and, in one way or another, useful in society. Of the younger I can say nothing, as I know not his character. The elder is much addicted to learning, of a good temper, and excellent capacity; but his constitution is delicate, and I do not think him made for the bustle of life. I have, therefore, had thoughts of getting him appointed, when he comes to be of age, my assistant and successor; provided he himself should then have no objection to that way of life: and, from my experience in teaching, the care I meant to take of his education, and the farrago of papers which I have got together on moral subjects, I flattered myself, that I might make him enter upon that employment in a way creditable to himself, and not unprofitable to society: But this plan could not be brought to bear these eight or nine years; and I cannot hope for so long a life. Besides, I have observed, that plans laid so early for children are seldom or never made effectual. The church is a scene of business still more tranquil than mine; and that, I presume, would not be disagreeable to him. But this is mere conjecture.

"Be assured, that it would do me great good, if I could flatter myself with the hope of visiting Edinburgh in the spring, and giving you the charge of my person and papers; not to mention the pleasure I should take in seeing my friends (of which I need not give them any assurances). I am sensible, that I have already lived too long in solitude; too long, I mean, for one who loves society and cheerfulness, as I do and always have done. No hermit lives more constant to his cave than I have done to my house for these eighteen months. The smallness of my house, and the delicacy of Mrs B.'s nerves, which cannot bear the least noise, will not allow me to have any company with me; and the consequence is, that there are only two houses in the town to which I am ever invited. In fact, I have not dined abroad more than twice these three months. Now that I am able to go to the college again, my business there gives me some amusement through the day; but all the long evening I sit alone, trying sometimes to read and sometimes to write, except now and then when I give my son a lesson in Virgil. This must in the end have very bad effects upon my health and spirits; and, therefore, it is no wonder that I long to be from home, and to sojourn for some little time in a land of friendship,

tranquillity, and cheerfulness. My first excursion (if I ever make any) must be to Gordon Castle.

"The "Grammatical Treatise," which I told you of, is finished. It is one of the longest, and not one of the worst, of my dissertations. I have also written, since you were here, "Remarks on Sublimity," being a sort of counter part to those on "Laughter:" but I am not quite pleased with this, nor has it received my last hand. I believe I shall next set about finishing what I formerly threw together on "Romance-writing and Chivalry;" not because it is important, but because it is amusing, and will require no deep study. It is pretty long too; and, in my dull jog-trot way, will be an object to me for at least two months. In a word, my posthumous works (for posthumous I believe I may call them) will soon be as voluminous as those I have printed. I must be transcribing one or other of my old scrawls; and when one transcribes, one enlarges and corrects insensibly. For I cannot think; I am too much agitated and *distrait* (as Lord Chesterfield would say) to read any thing that is not very desultory; I cannot play at cards; I could never learn to smoke; and my musical days are over.

"It gives me great pain to hear of the fate of poor Cooke. I lately read his voyage for the second time; and considered him not only as an excellent writer, an able philosopher, and the most consummate navigator that ever lived, but also as a person of the greatest magnanimity, modesty, and humanity. He was indeed one of my greatest favourites; and I look upon his death as an irreparable loss to his country and to mankind."

LETTER CXLI.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUTCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 31st January, 1780.

"WITH this you will receive a packet containing two "Mirrors,"* which are just come to hand, and which I send sepa-

* A periodical paper with that title, published at Edinburgh at this time. For some account of which, and of the "Lounger," see the Appendix, [DD.]

rate from the rest, (whereof I have now a considerable parcel) because your Grace will probably guess the author. I had no ambition to view myself in any of these folio looking-glasses; but, as the publisher had sent me a set from the beginning, and told me that he would have no returns but in kind, and, as I had never refused the terms, I thought myself bound in a sort of debt of honour, which I endeavoured to pay with some detached thoughts "On Dream-"ing." It is a subject which I ought to understand as well as other people; for I believe I have dreamed as much, both sleeping and waking, as most men of my age. Your Grace will observe, that the subject is not concluded, as I have not yet got time to transcribe the last part. The foolish gasconade at the top of the first, is an addition by the printer. I shall be happy if you find any thing tolerable in these two papers, to indemnify you for the dulness of this, which indeed I write under very unfavourable circumstances, —rheumatism, east-wind, shivering, a confused head, an aching heart, &c."

LETTER CXLII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUTCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 19th March, 1780.

"AS I sincerely sympathized with your Grace on the occasion of your late uneasiness, it is with the greatest pleasure I now send my congratulations on the good news from Rodney; by which you will see, that your brother's laurels, instead of being, as you apprehended, stained with blood, are decorated with gold. For the sake of your Grace, as well as of his country, I pray, that the same success may attend him wherever he goes; and that your tenderness and anxiety may soon receive their full reward in his safe return. When I consider the life that those lead who are engaged in the service of their country, the busy and merry faces with which they are continually surrounded, and those tumultuous hopes, and that bustle of employment, which keep their minds and bodies in constant exercise, I cannot but think their state much more enviable,

than that of the affectionate friend, whom they leave behind them at full liesure to magnify and multiply all their real dangers, and to imagine a thousand others that will never have any reality.

" I am greatly obliged to your Grace for the little novel with the great name. At the first reading I did not thoroughly understand it; but at the second I liked it well: and I agree with your Grace, that the author shows a capacity for much better things. There is something waggish enough, as well as uncommon, in the moral. But, in the preface, there are some thoughts and expressions not quite so feminine as I could have wished. " *Read my* " *book, or go hang yourself,*" is not like the language of a fair lady; any more than what she says about being drenched in Mr Walpole's champaign:—But perhaps she wished it to be thought a masculine performance.*

" I am happy that your Grace approves of my treatise " On " Dreaming." The publisher has never expressed any desire to have the sequel, and therefore I have not sent it. I suspect he may think it too serious for his paper. Your Grace seems to think, that I should avow more faith in dreams, if I thought it for the good of mankind that they should be believed. I confess there is something in this: and, as a proof, I beg leave to transcribe the concluding paragraph:

" To conclude: Providence certainly superintends the affairs " of men; and often, we know not how often, interposes for our " preservation. It would therefore be presumptuous to affirm " that supernatural cautions, in regard to futurity, are never " communicated in dreams. The design of this discourse is, " not to contradict any authentic experience, or historical fact, " but only to show, that dreams may proceed from a variety of " causes which have nothing supernatural; that our waking " thoughts are often equally unaccountable; that, therefore, a " superstitious attention to the former is not less absurd, than " a like attention to the latter would be: and that, though we are " not much acquainted with the nature of this wonderful mode of " perception, we know enough of it to see, that it is not useless or

* I presume the novel Dr Beattie here alludes to, is one which, though published anonymously, was understood to be written by Lady Craven, now Margravine of Anspach.

"superfluous; but may, on the contrary, answer some purposes of "great importance to our welfare, both in soul and body."*

"In the course of my walks, I straggled the other day into the Den of Rubislaw: But, whether it was owing to the stormy weather, or to the gloom of my own thoughts, I soon found it was not a fit place for me at that time. Instead of sighing and murmuring, the naked trees seemed to roar in the wind, and the black stream to rumble and growl through the rocks; and therefore, as I did not wish to detain even the *idea* of your Grace in so dreary a wilderness, I made haste to leave it. Two months hence it will be more pleasing, and, it is possible, I may then be more capable of being pleased."

LETTER CXLIII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 11th April, 1780.

"I AM glad that you approve of my criticism on the inscription for the burying-ground. It would still, as you say, be more classical, if it were shorter; but, "*in spe beatæ resurrectionis per* "*Christum*," ought not to be expunged. Classical writings are good; but the Christian faith is much better: and (to adopt the words of Addison a little varied) "I should be sorry to sacrifice my "catechism to my latinity." The epitaph on Franklin I had seen before: it is not at all amiss.

"I have, since the college broke up, been hard at work upon Mr Riddoch's manuscript sermons; but I have only got

* What Dr Beattie intended as a third number of a "Mirror" on "Dreaming," was not printed when that paper was published in single numbers. But it was added as a sequel to the seventy-fourth paper, when the "Mirror" was afterwards reprinted in volumes. They who wish to see more on this mysterious, and, may I be permitted to add, unintelligible faculty of dreaming, may consult Professor Dugald Stewart's very ingenious dissertation on the subject in his "Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind."†

† Chap. V. sect. x. p. 330.

through five of them, and there are still five-and-twenty before me. Never did I engage in a more troublesome business. There is not a sentence, there is hardly a line, that does not need correction. This is owing partly to the extreme inaccuracy of the writing, but chiefly to the peculiarity of the style; an endless string of climaxes; the involution of clauses within clauses; the unmeasurable length of the sentences; and such a profusion of superfluous words, as I have never before seen in any composition. To cure all these diseases is impossible. I must be satisfied with alleviating some of the worst symptoms: yet, to do my old friend justice, I must confess, that the sermons have in many places great energy, and even eloquence, and abound in shrewd remarks, and striking sentiments.* They are gloomy indeed; and will suggest to those who never saw the author, what is really true, that in preaching he always had a frown on his countenance. He seldom seeks to draw with the cords of love, or with the bands of a man: his motto should be, "Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men." Both methods are good in their season; but the former is, if I mistake not, most consonant to the practice of our Saviour and his Apostles, as well as to that of the English divines, who, I think, are the best of all modern preachers.

"This puts me in mind of a passage in my friend the Bishop of Chester's last letter, which I know you will be glad to see: "I "am glad to find (says he) we are to have another volume of ser- "mons from Dr Blair. For although they may be thought by "some severe judges a little too florid and rhetorical, yet they "certainly abound with good sense, and useful observations, and just "sentiments of religion, conveyed in lively and elegant language: "better calculated, perhaps, to engage the attention, and touch the "hearts of the generality of readers, than that correct simplicity and "chastity of diction, which nicer ears require. There is, however, "another volume of sermons expected, with which every class of "readers will, I conceive, be abundantly satisfied; I mean one from "Bishop Hurd. When such talents, and taste, and learning, as "his, are applied to the illustration of practical subjects, and the "recommendation of common religious duties, we may expect "every effect from them that human abilities are capable of pro-

* See page 307.

" ducing. Such publications as these will, I hope, in some degree, " counteract the principles that will probably be diffused over the " kingdom by a very different sort of composition; a second " volume of " The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire."

" I am much obliged to you, my dear sir, for your kind concern in my welfare, and for the many good advices contained in your last. I am deeply sensible of their importance, and will do what I can to follow them: But in my case there are some peculiar difficulties, which I do not well know how it will be possible for me to get over."

LETTER CXLIV.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 23d May, 1780.

" DR BLAIR'S second volume I also saw at Gordon Castle. The Duke and Dutchess read it *en famille* on Sunday evening; and I glanced over a good part of it. I did not think it quite equal to the first; but perhaps I may be mistaken. Dr Gerard's " Sermons," in one volume 8vo, are just now sent me; but I have not had time to read a single page. I am sure they will be sensible and instructive. The author was my master, and I have the greatest regard for him. He was more than my master,—he was my particular friend, at a time when I had very few friends.

" The death of Sir Adolphus Oughton must be a great affliction to all his friends: I feel for them, and for myself. In him, the world has lost one of the best men it had to boast of. He has lost nothing, but gained every thing; and therefore there is something selfish in our lamentations."*

LETTER CXLV.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUTCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 23d May, 1780.

" To say that my departure from Gordon Castle cost me some sighs and tears, is not saying much; as I am apt, of late, when

* See page 162.

alone, to be rather expensive in that way. I left you with a weight upon my mind, which would have been hardly supportable, if it had not been alleviated, in some degree, by the hope of soon meeting the Duke at Glasgow, and of seeing your Grace once more before the end of summer. By the bye, I hope Mr Nicols will not intermeddle in the arrangement of the dressing-room library; I flatter myself, that honour will be reserved for me.

"I have sent a small print, which my bookseller, in the abundance of his wisdom, and contrary to my advice, is determined to prefix to a new edition of my "Essays on Poetry, Music," &c. The figure, designed by Angelica, is certainly very noble,—much more so than I expected; and is intended to represent Socrates in prison, and under sentence of death, composing a hymn in honour of Apollo. But I am afraid, that the readers will neither guess at the meaning, nor see any connection between it and the book: in which case, they will no doubt suppose, that the author has prefixed his own image. However, the outline is good and graceful, and the attitude expressive. If it were not rather too melancholy, I would say, that it is very like Socrates. Your Grace knows, that the old philosopher was one of the merriest men of his time.

"I should write a treatise, instead of a letter, if I were to be particular in my acknowledgments of gratitude, for what I have experienced of your Grace's and the Duke's goodness. I shall only say, (for I know you would not read me to an end if I were on this subject to use many words) that I am perfectly sensible of your kind attention to the peculiarities of my case. I saw by many instances every day, how solicitous you were to withdraw my view from every thing that could create or revive painful thoughts. My gratitude and admiration, (which are two very pleasing and *healthy* emotions) were not wholly inadequate; and the consequences are visible to every body. Since my return, I have been complimented on my improved looks; though I have felt but little of that pleasure which the sight of home used formerly to produce in me. In fact, home is not good for me at present, and I shall leave it as soon as ever I can."

LETTER CXLVI.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. DR LAING.

Aberdeen, 25th May, 1780.

"WE often spoke of you at Gordon Castle, and with very great regard. The Duke is still more and more astronomical. He had Mr Copland* with him for a fortnight while I was there; and they two were, from morning to night, hard at work in calculation and observation. The Duke and Dutchess are both, I think, in better health than ever I knew them to be.

"The manuscript sermon of Bishop Butler I sent to the Bishop of Chester. You will like to see what he says of it. "It abounds "with that strong sense and sound reasoning which so eminently "distinguished him; and I cannot see in it the smallest foundation "for that accusation which it brought upon him, of being favourable "to Popery." This it seems, was the case at the time the sermon was preached; and it was perhaps for this reason that he never published it in his works.

"I send you inclosed a small piece of music, which I think you will like. I got the air at Gordon Castle, and I set to it the second part and bass. If it were sung with three voices, it would, I should imagine, have a very good effect.

"I lately heard two anecdotes, which deserve to be put in writing, and which you will be glad to hear. When Handel's "Messiah" was first performed, the audience were exceedingly struck and affected by the music in general; but when that chorus struck up, "For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth," they were so transported, that they all, together with the King, (who happened to be present) started up, and remained standing till the chorus ended: And hence it became the fashion in England for the audience to stand while that part of the music is performing. Some days after the first exhibition of the same divine oratorio,

* Professor of Mathematics in Marischal College.

Mr Handel came to pay his respects to Lord Kinnoul, with whom he was particularly acquainted. His Lordship, as was natural, paid him some compliments on the noble entertainment which he had lately given the town. "My Lord," said Handel, "I should be "sorry if I only entertained them; I wish to make them better." These two anecdotes I had from Lord Kinnoul himself. You will agree with me, that the first does great honour to Handel, to music, and to the English nation: The second tends to confirm my theory, and Sir John Hawkins's testimony, that Handel, in spite of all that has been said to the contrary, must have been a pious man."

LETTER CXLVII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUTCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 2d June, 1780.

"I HAD the honour to write to your Grace on my return to Aberdeen, and to send a parcel of "Mirrors." This will accompany the two last papers that we are to have under that title.

"I sympathize with you in your present solitude: For though nobody knows so well as your Grace how to improve retirement, yet I do not think it is good for any of us to be quite alone. If you go to the Glen,* I would earnestly recommend it to your Grace, to leave it to the moon and stars to adorn the night, and to be satisfied with sleeping under a canopy somewhat less sublime than that of heaven. For though, in the Eden of Gordon Castle, there is no serpent, I will not answer for the little Paradise of Glenfiddich; and though walks at midnight, and slumbers in the open air, might be had last summer without harm, we have no reason to expect that the present season will be equally indulgent. I grant, that a lonely walk by moonlight is pleasing, like other intoxications; but, like them too, it is hurtful to the nerves; and I know not, whether the cold bath in the morning be a sufficient antidote. I need not inform your Grace, and I hope you will never forget, that in the evening it is particularly dangerous to walk among trees, on account

* Glenfiddich.

of the damps. It was this that brought all his rheumatisms upon Major Mercer, though he was then in one of the best and driest climates in the world, the south of France.

"The Duke's summons was unexpectedly sudden: I hope his return will be equally so. He was so good, in passing through the town, as to call on me, notwithstanding his hurry, and to desire me to go with him to Edinburgh; an invitation so very agreeable, that nothing would have hindered me from accepting it but my son's bad health. The boy was at that time very ill; and I apprehended a consumption: But he is now much better; Dr Livingston having ordered for him a preparation of bark and the vitriolic acid, which, with a strict regimen in the article of diet, has in a few days had the happiest effects. So that, if nothing unexpected occur; I have thoughts of going southward next week; in which case, it will not be long before your Grace hears of me from Glasgow. You will probably hear from me too, if I meet with any adventure. I shall remember the commission in regard to Addison; and, if you will honour me with any other, please to direct to me at Sir William Forbes's, St Andrew's Street, Edinburgh.

"I had lately a *tête-à-tête* of several hours with Lord Kaimes and Mrs Drummond. There was no company; and we had much conversation on a great variety of subjects—your Grace and the Duke, Lord and Lady F., Mrs Montagu, David Hume, religion, episcopacy and presbyterianism, manufactures, music, Scotch tunes, with the method of playing them, &c.; and I flatter myself, that his Lordship and I parted with some reluctance on both sides. He assured me that he hated Mr Hume's tenets as much as I did, or could do; and he spoke of religion with great reverence. In a word, I found, from his conversation, that he is just what your Grace had described him to me, and that all the other accounts I had heard of him were wide of the truth. I would thank you, madam, for undeceiving me in this particular, and establishing peace, and I hope amity, between us; but I have so many things to thank you for, that if I were to enter upon that matter in detail, I should not know where to begin, and my letter would never have an end.

"Thus far I had written on Friday, when I had the honour to receive your Grace's letter of last Wednesday; which is so very flattering to me, that I cannot answer a word. I certainly left

Gordon Castle with great reluctance; and my heart and my fancy did, both of them, and still do, cast

"Many a longing, lingering look behind."

The society was most agreeable; but, I flatter myself, you will do me the justice to believe, it was not the parting with the *guests* that touched me so nearly,—though, I am sure, I love and esteem them all as much as they themselves would wish me to do.

"I delivered your message to Dr Livingston, with whom I dined the other day, in company with three sensible and cheerful Quakers. I spoke to them of my friend, and their brother, Mr Scott, (the author of the "Eclogues," which your Grace liked so much) whom the Londoner very well knew; and I diverted them with the history of a dinner, with which I was once entertained by ten or twelve of their fraternity, on the King's birth-day, at one o'clock, near the confluence of the Thames and Fleet-ditch, the very spot where Pope makes his Dunces jump into the mud, in the second book of the "Dunciad." These Quakers were all men of learning and sense; and their manners, polite though peculiar, were to me a very entertaining novelty. Indeed, the affection they showed me, deserved, on my part, the warmest returns of gratitude.

"I have put up in a parcel for your Grace, "Count Fathom," "The Tale of a Tub," and "Gaudentio di Lucca;" which, with the "Italian Prayer Book," I have committed to a faithful hand. "Gaudentio" (if you have never seen it) will amuse you, though there are tedious passages in it. The whole description of passing the deserts of Africa is particularly excellent. The author is no less a person than the famous Bishop Berkeley. As to the whisky, I cannot trust it in the rude hands of a carrier, and must therefore keep it till a more favourable opportunity offer: But, that it may remain sacred, I have sealed the cork of the bottle with the impression of three ladies,* whom I take to be your *Grace's* near relations, as they have the honour, not only to bear one of your titles, but also to resemble you exceedingly in form, feature, and manner. If you had lived three thousand years ago, which I am very glad you

* The seal he commonly used, had an impression of the three Graces.

did not, there would have been four of them, and you the first. May all happiness ever attend your Grace."

The following letter, from Dr Johnson to Dr Beattie, is equally creditable to both: It is the unsolicited and unbiassed testimony of one who was no flatterer; and strongly marks the high degree of estimation in which he held Dr Beattie, who returned his kindness with reciprocal regard.*

LETTER CXLVIII.

DR SAMUEL JOHNSON TO DR BEATTIE.

Bolt-Court, Fleet-Street, 21st August, 1780.

"MORE years than I have any delight to reckon have past since you and I saw one another. Of this, however, there is no reason for making any reprehensory complaint, *sic fata ferunt:* But, methinks, there might pass some small interchange of regard between us. If you say, that I ought to have written, I now write; and I write to tell you, that I have much kindness for you and Mrs Beattie, and that I wish your health better, and your life long. Try change of air, and come a few degrees southward; a softer climate may do you both good. Winter is coming on, and London will be warmer, and gayer, and busier, and more fertile of amusement than Aberdeen.

"My health is better; but that will be little in the balance, when I tell you, that Mrs Montagu has been very ill, and is, I doubt, now but weakly. Mr Thrale has been very dangerously disordered, but is much better, and I hope will totally recover. He has withdrawn himself from business the whole summer. Sir Joshua and his sister are well; and Mr Davis has had great success as an author, generated by the corruption of a bookseller.

* See p. 147.

More news I have not to tell you; and therefore you must be contented to hear that I am," &c.

When I mentioned* the commencement of my acquaintance and epistolary intercourse with Dr Beattie, I did not conceal my apprehensions, that I might be accused of vanity, in publishing to the world those warm expressions of affection and gratitude towards me, which occur in almost every letter I received from him; and of which, for that reason, I have suppressed by far the greatest part. But I should deem myself, not only unworthy of the friendship of Dr Beattie, but destitute of the best feelings of our nature, were I insensible to what he says in the following letter, written a short time after he had passed some weeks in our house at Edinburgh. Indeed, his partiality to every one of my family was very remarkable; and his esteem and admiration of that best part of it, in particular, of whom it has since pleased Heaven to deprive me, but the memory of whose talents and virtues will never be erased from my heart, could not but be very grateful to me.

I trust, therefore, that the reader will pardon me if I dwell with no common fondness on what he wrote on a subject, then so interesting to me, and to which the hand of time has now given an interest still more affecting.

LETTER CXLIX.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 6th November, 1780.

"YOUR letter, my dear sir, from Oxford, which I received a few days ago, gave me great pleasure, on account of the agreeable information it brought me of Lady Forbes's health and yours, and of your amusing journey. I know, from Pennant's "Welsh Tour,"

* See p. 51.

that there are many things in that country worthy of the traveller's attention; many wild and many soothing scenes, and many noble monuments of war, and of superstitious and feudal magnificence. Such things, to a mind turned like yours, would have a charm inexpressible; and would be highly amusing to Lady Forbes, whose mind is, if I mistake not, as open to the impressions of romantic art and nature, as either yours or mine; which, I will venture to say, is a bold word. Accept of my hearty welcome to your own house and home, which I hope you have reached before this time; for, in this season of tempest and immature winter, I should be sorry to think that you and your amiable associate were struggling with the inconveniences of deep roads, cold inns, and short days. I hope you got William settled to your mind during your absence; and that, at your return, you found him, and my friend Miss Forbes, and my sworn brother John, and my acquaintance James, and the other young gentleman, who, I hope, will one day be my acquaintance, in perfect health, and as flourishing as I wish them to be.

"The many kind attentions I received from my friends in Edinburgh and its neighbourhood, particularly from Lady Forbes and you, and Mr Arbuthnot, did me the greatest service; and I returned home a new man. But then I instantly found myself plunged into such a chaos of perplexity, as at once swallowed up all the little health I had been collecting from so many quarters; and, after a few days ineffectual wrangling, I was necessitated (I will not say to go, but) to run away to Peterhead, taking my son along with me; and there I remained seven weeks. To unfold the causes of this perplexity would, I think, require two volumes as large as the "Sorrows of Werter:"* I will not therefore attempt it at present. I shall only say, that it did not arise from a certain circumstance which lies nearest my heart, (for in that there is not the least variation) but from the unreasonableness of some persons with whom I am connected, and who, having not much sensibility themselves, can hardly make allowance for that of other people. However, matters are now a little softened, and seem to promise tranquillity, at least for a short time; and a very small abatement of trouble is a sort of tranquillity to one, who, like me, has been so long buffeted, on all sides, by more storms than are commonly found to assail a

* A German novel, much in fashion at that time.

person so insignificant as I am. Dr Livingston knows every circumstance of what I allude to.* I have in every thing been governed by his advice; for I begin to distrust my own faculties, as I feel them sensibly impaired. At any rate, I am sure I shall do well in doing what he recommended; as I have always found him a most intelligent, prudent, and affectionate friend, as well as one of the ablest of his profession. I shall some time hereafter explain myself to you on this subject very particularly. At present I wish rather to decline troubling you in regard to it.

"I am glad you met with the Bishop of Bangor. I knew him formerly when he was Dean of Canterbury;† and I once passed a morning in company with his lady Mrs Moore, at Dr Markham's, then Bishop of Chester, now Archbishop of York. Your account of Dr Moore is very just; he is really a most worthy man. By the bye, I think the English bench of Bishops was never more respectable, than at present, for learning and piety."

LETTER CL.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUTCHESS OF GORDON.

Whitehall, 16th May, 1781.

"I HAVE seen most of the fashionable curiosities; but will not trouble your Grace with any particular account of them. The exhibition of pictures at the Royal Academy is the best of the kind I have seen. The best pieces, in my opinion, are, Thais (with a torch in her hand); the Death of Dido; and a Boy supposed to be listening to a wonderful story; these three by Sir Joshua Reynolds: a Shepherd-boy, by Gainsborough: some landscapes, by Barrett. Christ healing the Sick, by West, is a prodigious great work, and

* Dr Thomas Livingston, a physician at Aberdeen, of the first eminence, between whom and Dr Beattie there long subsisted the most intimate friendship. He died the 9th March, 1785.

† Afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury.

has in it great variety of expression; but there is a glare and a hardness in the colouring, which makes it look more like a picture than like nature. Gainsborough's picture of the King is the strongest likeness I have ever seen; his Queen too is very well: but he has not given them attitudes becoming their rank; the King has his hat in his hand, and the Queen looks as if she were going to courtesy in the beginning of a minuet. Others may think differently: I give my own opinion.

"There is nothing at either playhouse that is in the least captivating; nor, I think, one player, Mrs Abingdon excepted, whom one would wish to see a second time. I was shocked at Leoni, in "Had I a heart for falsehood," &c. A man singing with a woman's voice, sounds as unnatural to me, as a woman singing with a man's. Either may do in a private company, where it is enough if people are diverted; but on a stage, where nature ought to be imitated, both are in my opinion intolerable.

"Johnson's new "Lives" are published. He is, as your Grace heard he would be, very severe on my poor friend, Gray. His life of Pope is excellent; and in all his lives there is merit, as they contain a great variety of sound criticism and pleasing information. He has not done justice to Lord Lyttelton. He has found means to pay me a very great compliment, for which I am much obliged to him, in speaking of Mr Gray's journey into Scotland in 1765.*

"Copley's picture of Lord Chatham's Death is an exhibition of itself. It is a vast collection of portraits, some of them very like: but, excepting three or four of the personages present, few of this vast assembly seem to be much affected with the great event; which divests the picture of its unity, and will in the next age make it cease to be interesting."

* Speaking of that journey, Dr Johnson says, "He (Mr Gray) naturally "contracted a friendship with Dr Beattie, whom he found a poet, a philoso-"pher, and a good man." Johnson's Lives, Vol. IV. p. 471.

LETTER CLI.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Middle Scotland-yard, Whitehall, 1st June, 1781.

"IF you will not allow eating and drinking, and walking and visiting, to be work, I must confess I have for these five weeks been very idle. Yet in such a perpetual hurry have I been kept by this sort of idleness, that I had no time to write, to read, or even to think. For the amusement of my young fellow-traveller,* and in order also to drive away painful ideas from myself, I have run through a complete *Encyclopedie* of shows, and monsters, and other curiosities, from "Douglas" at Drury-lane, to the puppet-show at Astley's riding-school; from the wonderful heifer with two heads, to Dr Graham and his celestial brilliancy; from the great lion in the Tower, and the stuffed elephant's skin at Sir Ashton Lever's, to the little Welsh woman in Holborn, who, though twenty-three years of age, weighs only eighteen pounds.

"But, what you will readily believe to have been much more beneficial to my health and spirits, I have been visiting all my friends again and again, and found them as affectionate and attentive as ever. Death has indeed deprived me of some since I was last here, of Garrick, and Armstrong, and poor Harry Smith; but I have still many left; some of whom are higher in the world, and in better health, than they were in 1775, and all as well and as flourishing as I had any reason to expect.

"I have seen Mr Langton several times, and I gave him your memorandum relating to M. Tremblay. He goes to Chatham in a few days with his family, in quality of engineer; and I intend to make him a visit there, having some curiosity to see the shipping and the fortifications. You certainly know that Mr Langton is an officer of militia. He loves the military life, and has been indefatigable in acquiring the knowledge that is necessary to it. He is

* His son.

allowed to be a most excellent engineer. Indeed he is excellent in every thing.*

"Johnson grows in grace as he grows in years. He not only has better health and a fresher complexion than ever he had before,

* Bennet Langton, Esq. of Langton, in the county of Lincoln, L.L. D. a gentleman no less eminent for his virtues, than for his ardent love of literature. Inheriting a paternal fortune, that rendered him independent of any profession, he devoted himself to the study of letters, which he cultivated with uncommon assiduity, first at the grammar schools of Kensington, Reading, and Beverly, afterwards at Trinity-college, Oxford. His favourite study was Greek, in which he became very learned; he was an excellent Latin scholar, and had even acquired a knowledge of the Hebrew. He had a thorough acquaintance with the French language, and read also the Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese.

But his successful and extraordinary acquirements in literature, were by no means the most remarkable parts of Mr Langton's character. His exemplary piety, his singular humility, and his unwearied endeavours in the exercise of the great duties of charity and benevolence, were his brightest ornaments. It was the emphatic testimony of Dr Johnson in his favour, "I know not "who will go to heaven if Langton does not: Sir, I could almost say, *Sit "anima mea cum Langtono;*"† and when Mr Boswell, to whom the Doctor made the remark, mentioned a very eminent friend of theirs as a virtuous man, Johnson's reply was,—"Yes, Sir, but he has not the evangelical virtue "of Langton." On another occasion he said to Mr Boswell, with a vehemence of affectionate regard,—"The earth does not bear a worthier man "than Bennet Langton."‡

His acquaintance with Dr Johnson commenced in a manner somewhat singular. When Mr Langton was no more than sixteen years of age, and before he went to the university, having read, with a high degree of admiration, Dr Johnson's celebrated "Rambler," which was first published about that period, he travelled to London chiefly with a view of becoming acquainted with its author. In this he succeeded; and Johnson being struck with his great piety, love of learning, and suavity of manners, conceived a warm affection for him; while he, on the other hand, was charmed with Dr Johnson, whose ideas and sentiments he found congenial with those he had early imbibed at home. From that period, notwithstanding a considerable disparity of years, a most intimate friendship took place between them, which lasted, without the slightest interruption, as long as Johnson lived. When the death of his inestimable friend drew near, Mr Langton attended him constantly, and soothed some of his last hours with the most pleasing and affectionate assiduity. Once when Mr Langton was sitting by his bedside, Dr

† Boswell's Life of Johnson, 3d ed. Vol. IV. p. 204.

‡ *Ibid.* Vol. III. p. 175.

(at least since I knew him) but he has contracted a gentleness of manners which pleases every body.* Some ascribe this to the good company to which he has of late been more accustomed than in the early part of his life. There may be something in this; but

Johnson is said to have seized his hand, and to have exclaimed with great emphasis—"*Te teneam moriens deficiente manu.*"

Nor did this amiable person, with all his attachment to literature, shut himself up in his library, or pass his time in literary indolence. Having engaged in that constitutional defence of his country, the militia, he laid aside his classical studies for a time, and resolved to make himself thoroughly master of military tactics. In this pursuit he employed himself with such assiduity, that in no long period he became an excellent officer. He acquired the esteem and admiration of his brother-officers, not only by his worth and learning, but by his elegant manners, and an inexhaustible fund of entertaining conversation; while he procured the love of the soldiers, by his mildness and humanity, which were so great, that he was never in a single instance betrayed into passion, nor ever heard to utter an oath.

So high stood his reputation for integrity and knowledge, that many years after he had left Beverly, where he had received a part of his education, a considerable number of the most respectable voters of that borough came to him, and invited him to offer himself a candidate at the ensuing election, promising him their support; to which they were induced without any personal acquaintance, merely from the high opinion they entertained of his character. An offer, however, which, from motives of conscience, he thought proper to decline.

Mr Langton was a member of the Literary Club;† and at the time of his death was the only original member remaining. It consisted of some of the most eminent persons of the age; and among them Mr Langton had the happiness to number among his intimate friends, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr Johnson, Mr Burke, Mr Beauclerk, Mr Garrick, Dr Goldsmith, Dr Warton, Mr Chamier, Mr Boswell; all of whom paid the debt of nature before him. In January 1785, his Majesty, thinking him the fittest person to succeed Dr Johnson, did Mr Langton the honour to appoint him Professor of Ancient Literature in the Royal Academy.

He married the Countess-dowager of Rothes, by whom he had a numerous family, and died on the 10th December, 1801, in the 65th year of his age.

It is with peculiar delight, that I contemplate the character of this pious and worthy man, whose virtues I revere, and whose example I could wish to imitate. I was happy in his friendship and unreserved epistolary intercourse, during the long period of nearly thirty years.

* See p. 334.

† For an account of this elegant literary society, see Boswell's Life of Johnson, Vol. I. p. 433.

I am apt to think the good health he has enjoyed for a long time is the chief cause. Mr Thrale appointed him one of his executors, and left him two hundred pounds: every body says he should have left him two hundred a-year; which, from a fortune like his, would have been a very inconsiderable deduction."

LETTER CLII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUTCHESS OF GORDON.

London, 3d June, 1781.

"YOUR Grace's letter gave me more pleasure than words can express. I see from it, you are in good health and spirits, and that you do me the honour sometimes to think of me. I meet with the greatest civilities here every day, from persons for whom I have the highest esteem; yet so far am I from entertaining any idea of remaining among them, that I begin to look forward with some impatience to that day on which I am again to set my face northwards, and which I think is not above three weeks distant: and I hope, that, in three or four weeks more, I shall have the honour to present you with as many pens* at Peterhead, as will convey to all your friends the most pleasing intelligence.

"The thunder is roaring while I write this; and a most welcome sound it is to me, as it will bring rain and coolness, of which the country stands, and I stand, very much in need. For some days past the heat has been intolerable; the mercury in the thermometer being at 80,° or, as some say, at 83°, which is five degrees higher, at least, than ever I knew it in Scotland. Persons who have been in

* Dr Beattie alludes here to the following epigram, written at Peterhead, when there in company with the Dutchess of Gordon the autumn preceding:

Extempore with a Pen, sent to her Grace the Dutchess of GORDON.

Go, and be guided by the brightest eyes,
And to the softest hand thine aid impart,
To trace the fair ideas, as they rise
Warm, from the purest, gentlest, noblest heart.

the West Indies say, that the Jamaica heat is much more tolerable. In this situation, it is no wonder that I should often think of the shades of the holly-bank at Gordon Castle, and the sea-breezes of Peterhead.

"The Persees, or Gentoos, or (as some call them) the Persian ambassadors, are at present one of the great curiosities of the town. They are charged with some embassy from their own country; but what that is nobody knows. Lord William Gordon did me the honour to make me one of a large party, whom he lately invited to Green-park Lodge to see them. By means of a gentleman, who acted as their interpreter, I asked them several questions, to which they returned pertinent answers. They are dressed in the manner of their country, in long robes of a whitish-coloured stuff resembling Indian silk, with turbans on their heads, differing however from the Turkish turbans. Their complexion is a yellowish black, resembling the mulatto colour, with mustachios or whiskers of the deepest black, as are also their eyes. Their features are regular, and of the European cast: the younger of the two may be called handsome; and the elder, who is his father, has a most expressive, sensible countenance. Though many people of great rank were present, particularly the Duke of Gloucester, Lord and Lady Pembroke, Lady Frances Scot, Lady Irvine and all her daughters, the three Lady Waldegraves, Lord Herbert, &c. the strangers behaved with great ease, as well as with great courtesy. Lord William presented me to the Duke of Gloucester, with whom I had the honour of a short conversation, and who made me very happy in saying, that he had heard your Grace speak of me."

LETTER CLIII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

London, 28th June, 1781.

"I HAVE seen Bishop Hurd* once and again; and last Sunday at Canewood passed a truly classical day with Lord Mans-

* Bishop of Worcester; between whom and Dr Beattie there existed a mutual respect and esteem. This venerable Prelate is the well-known author of "An Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies concerning the Chris-

field and him. I never saw Lord Mansfield better. He is in perfect health and good spirits, and looks no older than fifty-five. He walked with me three miles and a half, without the least appearance of fatigue.*

"The Bishop of Chester has been gone some time, and several others of my friends have left the town; so that as my business is finished, or nearly so, I have nothing to keep me longer here. I hope we shall meet in little more than a fortnight.

"Mrs Montagu, on going to her country-seat in Berkshire, about a month ago, was seized with a violent illness. The physicians sent her instantly to Bath, where she has been ever since. I had the pleasure to learn last night, by a letter from her own hand, that she is now quite well.

"I went lately to Rochester, on a visit to Mr Langton and Lady Rothes; who desire to be remembered to Lady Forbes and you. Mr Langton has sent me Tremblay's book, which I shall take proper care of. At Chatham I saw that wonderful sight, a ninety-gun ship on the stocks: but, from the top of Shooter's-hill, on my return, I saw a sight still more magnificent, a complete view of this huge metropolis from Chelsea to Blackwall, the back-ground embellished with a violent storm of thunder and lightning, which roared and flashed without intermission.

"I thought it my duty to appear at the levee before I left London; and accordingly the week before last I went to court. The King had not seen me for six years, and yet, to my surprise, knew me at first sight. He spoke to me with his wonted condescension and affability; and paid me a very polite compliment on the subject of my writings."

"tian Church:" "A Commentary and Notes on Horace's Art of Poetry:" "Moral and Political Dialogues:" "Sermons preached at Lincoln's-inn," and "A Moral Dissertation of the Truth of the Christian Religion," taken from Bishop Jeremy Taylor's "Ductor Dubitantium." Dr Beattie has elsewhere said, that he thought the Bishop of London and Bishop of Worcester the two best preachers he ever heard.†

* See p. 158.

† See Page 284.

LETTER CLIV.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUTCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 21st November, 1781.

"IN calling your Grace's attention to an "Essay on Beauty," I am afraid I shall incur the same censure with a brother-professor of mine, who had the assurance to deliver, in the hearing of the greatest commander on earth, a dissertation on the art of war. "Many a fool have I seen in my time," said Hannibal, "but this "old blockhead exceeds them all."

"However, one must keep one's word; and, as your Grace desired to see this Essay, and I promised to send it, (as soon as I could get it transcribed) I send it accordingly. I should not give you the trouble to return it, if I had not promised a reading of it to Sir Joshua Reynolds. As it is only an extract from "A Discourse on "Memory and Imagination," (which your Grace could not find time to look into at Peterhead, and which it is impossible for me to send at present, as I am correcting it for the press) I am afraid you will find some obscurity in it, especially towards the beginning.

"If the last letter had not miscarried, which I had the honour to write to your Grace, you would have known, that I am now very busy in revising and transcribing papers; as I am to put a quarto volume to press in little more than a month; and a quarto not much smaller than my last. Your Grace has seen a good deal of it, but not the whole."

LETTER CLV.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. MR WILLIAMSON.

Aberdeen, 5th December, 1781.

"IF Dr Horne* be returned to Oxford, I beg you will take the first opportunity to present my best respects to him, and assure

* Afterwards Bishop of Norwich, author of "A Letter to Adam Smith, "LL. D. on the Life, Death, and Philosophy of his friend David Hume, "Esq. by one of the People called CHRISTIANS." Printed at Oxford in the year 1777.

him, that I shall ever retain a most grateful sense of the honour he has done me in his elegant letter to Adam Smith. This acknowledgment comes rather late; but it is not on that account the less sincere. Why it has been so long delayed, I now beg leave to explain.

"The first notice I received of Dr Horne's excellent pamphlet, was in a short letter from you, which came at a time when my health was in so bad a way, that most of my friends here thought I had not many weeks to live. These sufferings, I must acknowledge, drove all literary matters out of my head: your letter was lost; and of Dr Horne's pamphlet I heard nothing more, till this last summer, when Lord Mansfield asked me, whether I had seen it, speaking of it at the same time in terms of the highest approbation. I was forced to confess I had not seen it, and never heard of it but once; and, to account for this, I told his Lordship what I have now told you. At Oxford, you will probably remember, that I found it in the beginning of July last, and then it was, that I knew for the first time the extent of my obligations to Dr Horne. I wished immediately, as you know, to pay my respects to him, but he was gone out of town. Since my return from England, I find the pamphlet has given universal satisfaction; and some of my friends have wished, that a small and cheap edition of it could be printed, and circulated all over the country, as they think it might counterwork the unwearied efforts which Mr Hume's friends have long been making to extol his character, and depress mine."

LETTER CLVI.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUTCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 18th August, 1782.

"I HAD the honour to receive your Grace's letter, and the noble present inclosed in it,* just as I was setting out for Edinburgh. After many attempts to thank you for it, and to tell you how much I glory in it, I find I must at last confine my gratitude

* A portrait of the Dutchess of Gordon.

and my exultations to my own breast; having no words that can in any degree do them justice. It is indeed a most charming picture, and an exact copy of Sir Joshua's; and I am envied the possession of it by every one who sees it. Mr Smith has outdone himself on the occasion; I am exceedingly obliged to him.

"Your Grace will perhaps remember, that at Gordon Castle there was some conversation about Petrarch. Knowing that it was the custom of his age to write gallant verses; and conjecturing, from other circumstances, that his passion for Laura was not so serious a business as his French biographer pretends, I happened to say, that there was some reason to think, that he wrote his Italian sonnets as much to display his wit as to declare his passion. I have since made some discoveries in regard to this matter, which amount to what follows:

"That Petrarch's passion for the lady was so far sincere, as to give him uneasiness, appears from an account of his life and character, written by himself in Latin prose, and prefixed to a folio edition of his works, of which I have a copy, printed in the year 1554. But that his love was of that permanent and overwhelming nature, which some writers suppose, or that it continued to the end of his life, (as a late writer affirms) there is good reason to doubt, upon the same authority. Nay, there is presumptive, and even positive evidence of the contrary; and that he was less subject, than most men can pretend to be, to the tyranny of the "Winged "Boy."

"The presumptive evidence is founded on the very laborious life which he must have led in the pursuits of literature. His youth was employed in study, at a time when study was extremely difficult, on account of the scarcity of books and of teachers. He became the most learned man of his time; and to his labour in transcribing several ancient authors, with his own hand, we are indebted for their preservation. His works, in my edition of them, fill 1455 folio pages, closely printed; of which the Italian Sonnets are not more than a twentieth part: the rest being Latin Essays, Dialogues, &c. and an epic poem in Latin verse, called "Africa," as long as "Paradise Lost." His retirement at Vaucluse, (which in Latin he calls Clausa) was by no means devoted to love and Laura. "There," says he, in the account of his life above mentioned, "almost all the works I ever published were completed, or

" begun, or planned: and they were so many," these are his words, " that even to these years they employ and fatigue me." In a word, Petrarch wrote more than I could transcribe in twenty years; and more than I think he could have composed, though he had studied without intermission, in forty. Can it be believed, that a man of extreme sensibility, pining, from twenty-five to the end of his life, in hopeless love, could be so zealous a student, and so voluminous a writer?

" But more direct evidence we have from himself, in his own account above mentioned, of his life, conversation, and character. I must not translate the passage literally, on account of an indelicate word or two; but I shall give the sense of it: " In my youth " I was violently in love; but it was only once; and the passion was " honourable, or virtuous; and would have continued longer, if the " flame, *already decaying*, had not *been extinguished* by a death, " which was bitter indeed, but useful." And a little after he says: " *Before I was forty years of age*, I had banished from my mind " every idea of love, as effectually as if I had never seen a woman." He adds some things, in a strain of bitterness, execrating the *belle passion*, as what he had always hated as a vile and a disgraceful servitude.

" In the above passage, your Grace will observe, that Petrarch does not name his mistress. This, if we consider the manners of that age, and the piety and good sense of Petrarch, may make us doubt whether Laura was really the object of his passion. I had this doubt for a little while: but Hieronymo Squarzafichi, a writer of that age, and the author of another Latin Life of Petrarch, prefixed to the same edition of his works, positively says, that the name of the lady whom the poet loved was Lauretta, which her admirer changed to Laura. The name, thus changed, supplies him with numberless allusions to the laurel, and to the story of Apollo and Daphne. Might not Petrarch, in many of his sonnets, have had an allegorical reference to *the poetical laurel*, which was offered him at one and the same time by deputies from France and from Italy; and with which, to his great satisfaction, he was actually crowned at Rome with the customary solemnities? In this view, his love of fame and of poetry would happily coincide with his tenderness for Laura, and give peculiar enthusiasm to such of his thoughts as might relate to any one of the three passions.

"But how, you will say, is all this to be reconciled to the account given by the French author of that Life of Petrarch, which Mrs Dobson has abridged in English?

"I answer: First, That Petrarch's own account of his life, in serious prose, is not to be called in question: and, Secondly, That to a French biographer, in a matter of this kind, no degree of credit is due. I have seen pretended lives, in French, of Horace, Tibullus, Propertius, &c. in which there was hardly one word of truth; the greatest part being fable, and that sort of declamation which some people call *sentiment*. And your Grace knows, that no other character belongs to the "Bellisarius" and "Incas of Peru" by Marmontel. The French life of Petrarch I consider in the same light; and that what is said of his *manuscripts* letters and memoirs, is no better than a job contrived by the bookseller, and executed by the author."

LETTER CLVII.

JOHN SCOTT* TO DR BEATTIE.

Ratcliff-cross, London, 10th May, 1783.

"ACCEPT my best thanks for thy very kind and acceptable letter. I am now happy enough to be able to say, that I have

* John Scott of Amwell, near Ware, in Hertfordshire, was, as this letter indicates, one of the people called Quakers; a poet of no mean genius, as his Eclogues, Elegies, Odes, and other pieces which have been collected and published, amply testify. His two longest works are, "Amwell," a descriptive poem, and an "Essay on Painting." He was not less distinguished by the blameless simplicity of his manners, than by the warmth of his friendship, and the activity of his benevolence. Though bred to no profession, he was far from leading a life of idleness or inactivity; but while he amused himself with poetry and gardening, of which he was uncommonly fond, he employed much of his time in works of public utility in the vicinity of his residence. He published a pamphlet full of good sense and philanthrophy, entitled, "Observations on the Present State of the Parochial and "Vagrant Poor." He frequently interfered in their distresses, and was ever ready to stand forward as the arbitrator of differences among his neigh-

finished my volume of "Poems." I shall wait, with some anxiety, for my friend's opinion of some of the contents, particularly the "Oriental Eclogues," the "Mexican Prophecy," and the "Essay on Painting;" for on these, as far as I can trust my own judgment, I think must much depend the rank I may be allowed to hold as a poet. I should like also to know which of the smaller odes most obtained my friend's approbation. The "Essay on Painting" was an after-thought; it was begun when the previous part of the book was printed, and finished in about five weeks; it was, therefore, a hasty, though I hope not an incorrect, performance. I had designed (as I mention in the introduction) something of this kind long before Hayley's "Epistle to Romney" appeared, but had laid it aside. Happening to write a few lines on the subject, with an intent to introduce them into another poem, where I afterwards found them not easy introducible, and thinking them too good to be lost, I determined on the work in question, where I knew they would appear with propriety. Thus, from very small, and indeed unforeseen circumstances, things of some importance often arise. I endeavoured, as much as possible, to avoid the same ground that Hayley had trodden. On Landscape he had said little; I had therefore room to expatiate. On Portrait he had said much; and I was necessitated to say something; but even there I wished

bours. In general, he seems to have imitated the philanthrophy of that well-known character, "The Man of Ross." Dr Beattie, with whom, among other literary persons, he had become acquainted, and between whom a similarity of taste had produced an intimate friendship, alludes, in one of his letters,† to this part of Mr Scott's character: "I am astonish-"ed," say Dr Beattie, "at the activity of your mind, and the versatility "of your genius. It is really amazing, that one and the same person should, "in one and the same year, publish the most elegant poems, and a 'Digest "of Laws relating to the Highways.' Go on, Sir, in your laudable resolu-"tion of delighting and instructing mankind, of patronizing the poor, and "promoting the public weal."

This amiable man died of a putrid fever at London, the 12th December, 1783, in the fifty-fourth year of his age.

See a well-written life, and critical remarks on his works, by Dr Anderson, prefixed to his poems in the "British Poets," Vol. XI. p. 717.

† In 1778, with a friendly zeal, he undertook the defence of his friend Dr Beattie, from an anonymous attack in "The Gentleman's Magazine" for January, in a letter in the same Magazine for March following, to which he signed his name, and received Dr Beattie's acknowledgements on the occasion.

not to imitate, but rather to rival, my predecessor. Hayley's piece has great merit, but is tedious from its length and inequality. That kind of rhyming prose, used by Dryden in his earlier works, seems coming much into fashion; but I am clear it must be a vicious taste that gives it encouragement. For the couplet versification, we have no better model than that of Pope; or if that can be at all improved, it must be by a sparing use of Dryden's manner in what (notwithstanding I have the authority of Johnson against me) I do not hesitate to call the best poetry he ever wrote, his "Tales" and "Fables." Another vicious mode of composition seems also to be gaining ground, which, if adopted, will almost absolutely destroy the distinction between two species of writing, which should be ever kept separate, rhyme and blank verse: I mean, breaking the lines of couplets; or, in other words, running the sense too much from one line to another. This is countenanced by one very good poet, Meikle, translator of the "Lusiad," who, in a fine poem, entitled "Almada-hill," has practised it to an excess, and by that means injured his poetry. I am told Mason is about a translation of Fresnoy's "Poem on Painting." The original, as far as I can judge, reads flat and dry. Dryden's prose version does not mend it. What charms Mason's poetical powers may bestow upon it, I do not pretend to determine. There is more in expression than we are often aware of. The same thought in different language will disgust or delight us. So just is the axiom of Pope,—

"True wit,* is nature to advantage dressed;
"What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed."

"I believe I mentioned in a former letter, that I had seen Bryant on the "Rowleyan Controversy," and that Dean Mills had published a pompous quarto edition of the author. Both these gentlemen have been completely answered, in a very good and decisive pamphlet, by Mr Thomas Warton; and Mills has been most severely ridiculed in an archaiological epistle. This is an excellent performance of the serio-humorous kind: it is pretty

* I should rather have said true poetry; or indeed good composition of any species.

boldly attributed to Mason; but I scarcely think it is his. Mason has given us nothing avowedly his own, but of the sublime or pathetic as far as I can recollect. I should rather fix this new production on the yet undiscovered author of the famous "Heroic "Epistle;" they certainly breathe the same spirit of poetry and politics.

"Did I ever mention Dr Johnson's prefaces? My friend has doubtless seen that fund of entertainment and information; of striking observations and useful reflections; of good sense, and of illiberal prejudices; of just and of unjust criticism. That a mind, so enlarged as Johnson's in some respects, should be so confined in others, is amazing. The titled scribblers of the last century; the prosaic Denham, the inane and quaint Yalden, and even the Grub-street, Pomfret, meet with all possible favour. Every man who expresses sentiments of religious or political liberty; every man who writes in blank verse, or writes pastoral; and every man contemporary with himself—is sure to meet with no mercy. To Blackmore, I think, he has done but justice. Blackmore, with all his absurdities, was a poet; his poem on the "Creation" (tedious as it is) sufficiently proves it. Pope and his brother wits were too hard upon Blackmore: it was very well to point out his faults, but ungenerous to stigmatize him as an absolute dunce. Dr Johnson has very properly estimated the merits of Prior, whose poetical powers were too highly rated by the readers of his own time; though it must be allowed, that much of his "Solomon," and some of his "Henry and Emma," is real poetry. Dyer, Shenstone, Collins, Akenside, and Gray, are the authors whom I most regret as sufferers by Johnson's unjust censure: and what must one think of the critic's taste, who could prefer Dryden's wretched, conceited "Ode on Mrs Killigrew," to the "British Bard" of our English Pindar?

"As soon as thy health and avocations will permit, I shall be glad of a few lines from a friend, whose correspondence is always highly acceptable."

LETTER CLVIII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 28th October, 1782.

"ELPHINSTON's "Martial" is just come to hand. It is truely an *unique*. The specimens formerly published did very well to laugh at; but a whole quarto of nonsense and gibberish, is too much. It is strange that a man, not wholly illiterate, should have lived so long in England, without learning the language.

"I have lately been very much entertained and instructed with a work of a different nature, which will do honour to this country, and be a blessing to mankind, Dr Campbell's "Translation of the "Four Gospels," with explanatory and critical annotations. I have revised the first eighteen chapters of Matthew; and am really astonished at the learning and accuracy of the author. He had before given the world sufficient proofs of both; but this will be his greatest work. It will be accompanied with preliminary dissertations, for explaining what could not be conveniently illustrated in notes. I have read the titles of the Dissertations, and shall soon have them in my hands. The whole will make, as I guess, two quarto volumes. I have several times studied the Gospels in the original; but had no idea, till now, that the common translation stood so much in need of a revisal."

LETTER CLIX.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 30th January, 1783.

"I LATELY had the happiness to receive from the Bishop of Chester the most agreeable accounts of your health; which no perplexities of my own can ever make me cease, even for a single hour, to be interested in.

"Your little godson, who was all last summer in the country, returned home in October, and since that time has been under my own inspection; which, till now, the peculiar circumstances of my family did not permit him to be. I found him wild and not very tractable; though not destitute either of affection or of generosity. He had been committed to the care of people, who it seems thought it too soon to inure him to moral discipline. But as that part of education cannot, in my opinion, begin too early, I have been combating his evil habits with all the caution and steadiness I am master of, and my success has been not inconsiderable. I have taught him to fear my anger above every thing (for he is too young to be impressed with any fear of a higher kind); and I find, that the more he fears the more he loves me. His brother cooperates with me in this good work; and I hope we shall in time make him a very good boy. He is stout and healthy, and the picture of good humour and good cheer, and a very great favourite in the neighbourhood. Bodily correction I have never used as yet; considering it as a dangerous remedy, which ought not to be had recourse to, till all others have been tried and found ineffectual. My other boy is busy at his French and Greek. I thought him too young to go into the higher classes, and have made him study the elements of Greek a second time. He is not, I think, very lucky in a French master. The man speaks the language well enough, but does not seem to be an exact grammarian: however, my boy knows grammar pretty well, and has always been accustomed to study with accuracy; so that I hope he is in no danger of getting into habits of superficial reading.

"We have been here, and still are, in great apprehensions of famine. Last summer was cold and tempestuous beyond imagination; and in many parts of the country there was little or no harvest. Oatmeal, without which our common people have no notion of supporting life, sells just now at double its usual price; and the common people are murmuring; and anonymous letters, in a threatening style, have been sent to many persons. In no other part of Scotland is the scarcity so great as in this town and neighbourhood; and I believe it is the fear of the military alone that prevents insurrection.

"I am just now informed, that preliminaries of peace with France and Spain are signed, and that a cessation of hostilities is

agreed on with the Dutch. The news is certainly very agreeable if the conditions be but moderately good. Whether our separation from America will be beneficial or hurtful, either to this country or to that, is, I think, doubtful: but such a separation must have happened soon; and I wish it had happened forty years sooner. Though our empire is diminished in extent, our national honour is not impaired; and our enemies, notwithstanding what they have gained, and we have lost, have no cause of triumph.

"My new book has been in the press for some time; and I have now received sixteen sheets of it, which is about one-fifth of the whole. It is a quarto, of the same size nearly with my last; and, what I have seen, is very correctly printed. The proprietor, Mr Strahan, thinks it will be ready for publication in the spring. I am afraid the plainness and simplicity of the style will not hit the taste of the present race of orators and critics; who seem to think, that the old English tongue, and the old English constitution, stand equally in need of change. Their reasonings, however, have not yet satisfied me, that our forefathers were at all inferior to us in the arts either of writing, or of government. My models of English are Addison, and those who write like Addison, particularly yourself, madam, and Lord Lyttelton. We may be allowed to imitate what we cannot hope to equal; nay, I think we are, in every laudable pursuit, commanded by all the great teachers of mankind to do so.

"The literary labours of Lord Kaimes have come to an end at last. He was certainly an extraordinary man: and though he cannot be vindicated in every thing, his enemies must allow that his mind was uncommonly active, and his industry indefatigable. He was six-and-fifty years an author: for to a Collection of Decisions, dated in 1726, I have seen a preface of his writing. He retained his good humour to the last. He and I misunderstood one another for several years; but we were thoroughly reconciled long before his death, and he acknowledged, that he had utterly mistaken my character.

"I am very happy to find, that my notions, in regard to the origin of language, coincide so exactly with yours. I have, I think, confuted Monboddo's theory; which I look upon as equally absurd and dangerous. He and Lord Kaimes passed a few days last autumn together at Gordon Castle, and gave no little entertainment to the company; for they two were in every thing direct opposites;

and they mutually despised and detested each other. Kaimes confessed, that he understood no Greek; and Monboddo told him, that no man who was ignorant of Greek could pretend to write a page of good English. Monboddo has many good qualities: but on the subject of Greek and of Aristotle, he is as absurd and as pedantic as Don Quixote was on that of chivalry. The last time I saw him, I incensed him to the highest degree by calling the great circumnavigator Cook an ingenious philosopher. It was to no purpose that I explained the sense in which I used the word, and told him, that by *philosophy* I meant, *the knowledge of nature applied to practical and useful purposes*: he seemed to think that I had offered an insult *to science*, by calling a man a philosopher, whose only merit, he said, was "that of being a good seaman, even as one "may be an expert shoemaker or tailor, and who, besides, was of "an obscure origin: for I hold," said he, "that in men, as well as "in horses, nothing can be *great* but what is *noble*." It was, indeed, in opposition to this notable aphorism, that I had mentioned the name of Cook, with that encomium which provoked the wrath of Monboddo."

LETTER CLX.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 2d March, 1783.

"I HAVE been more idle, and more in company, this winter than I used to be; which the doctor tells me is good for my health. But I have not been quite idle. I have revised, with all the attention I am master of, Dr Campbell's new translation of Matthew and Mark, with the notes upon it, and ten or twelve of his preliminary dissertations; and that this revisal has been the work of some time, you will readily believe, when I tell you, that I have written, of critical remarks, not less than seventy or eighty quarto pages. Many of these indeed I thought of little moment; but as lovers before marriage are advised to be as quick-sighted, and after marriage as blind as possible, to one another's faults, so I consider it as my duty to be as captious as possible in the revisal of a friend's work before

publication, and when it is published to be captious no longer. The Principal, however, is pleased to think more favourably than I do of my strictures, and tells me he has adopted nine-tenths of them. Of the translation of Luke and John, and the notes upon it, and of four or five more preliminary dissertations, he has the materials almost ready; but they are not yet put together. The whole will amount to two large quartos at least; and will, in my opinion, be one of the most important publications that has appeared in our time. It is really a treasure of theological learning, exact criticism, and sound divinity; and has given me more information, in regard to what may be called scriptural knowledge, than all the other books I ever read. His translation conveys the meaning of the original very correctly, and, so far as I could observe, neither adds nor takes away a single idea; but I have told him, that I wish it had been more strictly literal, and more conformable to the Greek (or rather to the Hebrew) idiom, which is in many things congenial to the English. His love of conciseness makes him sometimes less simple, though perhaps not less expressive, than the original, and sometime less harmonious than the common version. But I believe most of the passages of this sort, that I objected to, will be mended."

LETTER CLXI.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUTCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 16th March, 1783.

"I DO not wonder that your Grace should be greatly affected with Lord Kaimes's kind remembrance in the hour of death. Friendship, that can stand such a test, must be very sincere indeed. But you have other friends, who are capable of all this, though perhaps it may not be in their power to show it. Recollection and composure are not granted to all, in those awful moments. On his own account, his death is not to be regretted; but Mrs Drummond* is much to be pitied. No man ever enjoyed life more than

* The wife of Lord Kaimes. She assumed the name of Drummond, on succeeding to her family estate, on the death of her nephew.

he; and, when we consider how little time he passed in sleep, we cannot suppose his age to be less than one hundred and twenty. All his wishes, with respect to this world, were gratified; and there is no reason to think, that his life could have been prolonged without a prolongation of pain. I hope he employed a good hand to draw the picture. A good portrait of a dear friend is inestimable; but an indifferent one is a daily and an hourly grievance. As I wish to die satisfied with every body, it gives me great pleasure to think, that before his death, he became satisfied with me; this, and many other good things, I owe to your Grace.

"I need not attempt to express what I feel, in consequence of that kind invitation which your Grace and the Duke have honoured me with. I have been long accustomed to his Grace's goodness and your's in this particular: but I trust my gratitude is as lively as it was at the first. If my health would permit, and if I could get my family properly settled, nothing would hinder me from setting out for Gordon Castle the first or second week of April."

LETTER CLXII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE HONOURABLE MR BARON GORDON.

Aberdeen, 30th March, 1783.

"I REALLY do not know what to say, or what to think, of the times. They seem to exhibit scenes of confusion, which are too extensive for my poor head either to arrange or to comprehend. We had much need of peace; but I know not whether we have reason to rejoice in the peace we have made. Yet Lord Shelburne spoke plausibly for it; but Lord Loughborough was as plausible on the other side. When a controversy turns upon a fact, in regard to which the two contending parties are likely never to agree, a decision is not to be expected; and people may continue to wrangle, and to make speeches, till death; like the president of the Robin-Hood, knock them down with his hammer, without coming one inch nearer the truth than they were at first. This seems

to be the present case. If we were as much exhausted, and our enemies as powerful, as one party affirms, we had nothing for it but to surrender at discretion, and any peace was good enough for us: but if we were as little exhausted, and our enemies as little powerful as the other party says, we might have made a struggle or two more before we called out for mercy.

"To the present confusion in our councils I can foresee no end, till the rage of party subside, or till the executive power regain some part of that influence, which it has been gradually losing ever since I was capable of attending to public affairs. The encroachments that have lately been made on the power of the crown are so great, as to threaten, in my opinion, the subversion of the monarchy. Our government is too democratical; and what we want, in order to secure its permanence, is not more liberty, for we have too much, but the operation of a despotical principle to take place in cases of great public danger. If it had not been for this, the consular state of Rome would not have existed two hundred years. I hate despotism, and love liberty, as much as any man; but because medicine has sometimes killed as well as cured, I would not for that reason make a vow never to swallow a drug as long as I lived. The despotical principle I speak of, might be a little violent in its operation, like James's powders and laudanum; but if it could allay paroxysms and fevers in the body-politic, (which, by judicious management, it certainly might do) it would be a valuable addition to the *materia medica* of government."

LETTER CLXIII.

JOHN SCOTT TO DR BEATTIE.

Amwell, 29th August, 1783.

"I KNOW not what apology to make, for not doing what ought to have been done many weeks ago. I can only say, what I am sure my friend will readily believe, that whatever were the causes of my so long delaying to answer his kind and acceptable letter, want of regard for him was not among the number.

"I have read much of the "Dissertations,"* and with much pleasure. I cannot wish any part of them suppressed, because I do not find them tedious. All, whom I have heard speak of them, have spoken highly of their merit; and I believe they will stand high in the opinion of all good judges. For my own part, I have read them with an almost uninterrupted correspondence of sentiment on every occasion. This was very far from being the case during my perusal of Dr Johnson's "Lives;" I perused his narrative with avidity, and sometimes profited by his remarks; but, in general, I found a forcible repulsion to his political and literary opinions, but more to the illiberal manner in which they are expressed. It is strange so good a writer, both in prose and verse, should be so ill a critic; and that a man, whose private character is so benevolent, should, as an author, indulge such contemptuous acrimony.

"Thy countryman, Dr Blair, has published a critical work; I have not read it, a few detached passages excepted, which I met with in the reviews, and as I gave the volumes a cursory inspection as they lay in a bookseller's shop. I saw enough of them, however, to determine me to purchase them, as soon as I have leisure for reading. At present I am much engaged with my own intended publication, which is in the press. I believe I mentioned the nature of this critical work of mine in a former letter. It will consist of a series of essays on several celebrated poems, by an investigation of whose beauties and defects I have exemplified the difference between good and bad composition.† My criterion of merit is classical simplicity; that is to say, the manner of Homer, the Greek tragic poets, Virgil, Milton, Pope, in contradistinction to every species of false ornament. There never was a time when it was more necessary to counteract the public taste, which is now running wild after this fashionable *clinquant*, as I think it is termed by Addison. The poems I have criticised are, Denham's "Cooper's "Hill," of which I have nothing to praise, and all to censure; Milton's "Lycidas," and Dyer's "Ruins of Rome," which I have

* Dr Beattie's Dissertations, moral and critical, on Memory and Imagination, &c. published this year.

† These Critical Essays were published in 1785.

vindicated from the censure of Dr Johnson, and given the praise they merit; Pope's "Windsor Forest," Collins's "Oriental "Eclogues," Gray's "Elegy," Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," and Thomson's "Seasons;" in all which I have much to applaud, and something to blame.

"The Monthly Reviewers say, that criticism is fashionable; I hope then I shall have the luck to be for once in the fashion. I might often have been in fashion, but for a restive kind of disposition, that liked to write and print what pleased my own fancy, rather than what I had reason to think would please the readers of the day. I never could flatter the Bath-Easton establishment, nor be a candidate for their laureat sprig of myrtle; nor can I now praise the flimsy, flowery, inane productions of the Hayleyian school. I love good poetry, but I cannot admire bad, how much soever it may be the *ton* to admire it.

"My worthy friend, Mr Potter, in a letter I received from him some time ago, requested me to mention when I wrote, that he had ordered Dodsley to send thee a copy of his "Observations on Gray," with two or three proofs of the head, which I expect are before now safely arrived. I know, by experience, how difficult it is to get a good likeness of any person in an engraving; I am sure mine, prefixed to my poems, is not a good one. Mr Hoole's prefixed to his "Ariosto," is a very good one, and cost much less than mine. I did not know Gray, but somehow or other, from my own ideas of what such a man should have been, I am wholly of thy opinion, that Mason's print could not be quite like the original.

"As I seldom have leisure to keep copies of my letters, I am apt to forget, from time to time, what I have written; I do not now recollect, whether I mentioned in my former letter two recent publications, in the poetical way, of considerable merit. The one is called, "Aurelia, or the Contest," a mock epic, in censure of the ladies for painting their faces, and other fashionable female foibles. This is written by the younger Hoole, son of the translator of "Ariosto," who published a pretty imitation of the "Bath Guide," entitled, "Modern Manners." He is a young man, and I think a rising genius; his last poem has not many faults, it is indeed rather too long. The other publication is called, "The Village," a very classical composition, but also too long; and very unnecessarily, and I think absurdly, divided into two books. It seems designed as a

contrast to Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," in one point of view; that is, so far as Goldsmith expatiates on the felicities and innocencies of rural life. The author of "The Village" takes the dark side of the question; he paints all with a *sombre* pencil; too justly, perhaps, but, to me at least, unpleasingly. We know there is no unmixed happiness in any state of life, but one does not wish to be perpetually told so. The author of the above is a Mr Crabbe, who published a poem, called "The Library," about two years ago. I am told he was an apprentice to a surgeon in Suffolk, but, on the display of his poetical talents, met with friends, who advised him to take orders, and gave him a living. Literary merit, in this age, rarely meets such encouragement.

"I am sorry, my dear friend, to hear so ill an account of thy health. I hope the sea air and bathing may by this time have had their desired salutary effect. When health and leisure will permit, I shall hope to be favoured with a line. Thy correspondence is always highly acceptable."

LETTER CLXIV.

DR BEATTIE TO THE BISHOP OF WORCESTER.

Peterhead, 18th September, 1783.

"YOUR Lordship's very kind letter, which I had the honour to receive about six weeks ago, demands my most grateful acknowledgments. I wished to have made them sooner, but was prevented by a tedious indisposition; from which, after long perseverance in the use of the sea-bath at this place, I am now recovered so far as to be able to attend a little to the duties of life.

"I know not how to thank your Lordship for honouring my book with a perusal; nor have I words to express the pleasure which your approbation of it has afforded me. Some professed critics have been pleased to find much fault with it, and with me; but your favourable opinion, my Lord, is more than a sufficient counterbalance to all they have done, or can do, and satisfies me, that my endeavours to do a little good, and give a little harmless

amusement, have not been wholly unsuccessful. Indeed I have the happiness to find, that most of those who approve my principles, are as friendly to this performance as I could desire.

"I have not yet met with Dr Blair's "Lectures," but I hear they have been very well received. With respect to his "Sermons," I am entirely of your opinion. Great merit they undoubtedly have; but I cannot discover in them that sublime simplicity of manner and style, which I have long thought essential to such compositions, and have seen so nobly exemplified in those of your Lordship.

"Whether it will be in my power to prepare any more of my papers for the press, I know not; but I shall keep the thing in view; and, if Providence grant me a moderate share of health and spirits, shall consider it as my indispensable duty, as far as I am able, to promote the love of truth, and to oppose the licentious doctrines that many authors of this age are labouring so industriously to establish. Though my last publication does not bear a controversial form, a great part of it was really intended, as your Lordship observes, "to correct some mistakes, and obviate some abuses, of "other writers."

"I would have availed myself, with the greatest pleasure, of your Lordship's most obliging invitation to Worcestershire; but I am not yet so well as to undertake a journey, and the business of my profession will soon call me to Aberdeen, and confine me to the college. Next summer I hope I shall be in a condition to revisit England, and pay my respects to your Lordship once more."

LETTER CLXV.

GEORGE COLMAN, ESQ.* TO DR BEATTIE.

Margate, 13th October, 1783.

"I AM highly flattered by your approbation of my explanation and version of "Horace's Epistle," and more especially by your

* The translator of Horace's "Art of Poetry," of "Terence," into familiar blank verse; and author of some excellent comedies, "The Jealous "Wife," "The Clandestine Marriage," "The English Merchant," "The "Deuce is in Him," and several others.

exact coincidence of opinion concerning the drift and intention of the poet; whose purpose has long appeared to me so very obvious, that I have only wondered at its having been so strangely misconceived and mistaken. Still, however, I was inclined to doubt and suspect the treacherous self-complacency of my own feelings, till I found my sentiments confirmed by men of learning and discernment like yourself. I ought, however, in some measure, to regret the having innocently deprived the world of your intended essay on the subject, though that very circumstance inspires me with the most agreeable confidence in the propriety of my own undertaking."

LETTER CLXVI.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUTCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 29th January, 1784.

"YOUR Grace will do me the justice to believe, that nothing in which you are interested can be indifferent to me. I am very much concerned to find, from the general strain of the letter, which I had the honour to receive a few days ago, that your present situation is not quite agreeable to you. You will no doubt be anxious and solitary; but nobody is so well prepared for solitude as you are. The resources you have in your own mind, and the pleasure you take in superintending and instructing your charming young friends, will make the lonely hours glide imperceptibly away.

"I have got one companion for your Grace, and shall send him by the first opportunity. It is Hoole's Translation of "Ariosto," which I have just received, and which your Grace commissioned me to order for you. It fills five large octavo volumes; the type very good and comfortable; the prints only so so. I know not how you will relish it; but I own it is rather too extravagant for me. Spenser is not less extravagant; but the harmony of his numbers, and the beauty and variety of his descriptions and of his language, intoxicate me into an utter forgetfulness of all the faults of his fable. Hoole is a smooth versifier; but he is rather a feeble

one. His harmony is without variety; for he knows not how to adapt it to the subject; or rather his ear is not delicate in perceiving the effects that words may produce by their sound, as well as by their signification. This deficiency, however, is not peculiar to Hoole; he has it in common with Waller, Lansdowne, Roscommon, and several other poets of no inconsiderable name. I formerly attempted to read "Ariosto" in his own Italian; but found him tedious, and could not endure the incoherence of the fable. I have conversed with Italians, and read critics on the subject, but never could see the reason of that preference which his countrymen give him to the correct, the classical, the delightful Tasso.*

LETTER CLXVII.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 2d February, 1784.

"MR DILLY having informed me, that a new edition is wanted of the "Minstrel," and the other little poems subjoined to

* On this question, regarding the respective poetical merits of Ariosto and Tasso, see Baretti's "History of the Italian Tongue," prefixed to his "Italian "Library."† A friend has informed me, (for I have not been able to meet with the book in this country) that the finest piece of criticism, any where to be met with, on this subject, is in a prose letter of Metastasio's, at the end of one of his two posthumous volumes. He concurs in opinion with Dr Beattie; and, with all due respect for the critical abilities of Mr Baretti, Metastasio must be allowed to be a great authority. This letter of Metastasio's, which is addressed to Ch. Sig. Don Dominico Diodati, a Neapolitan lawyer, is mentioned by Tiraboschi in his "Storia della Poesia Italiana,"‡ lately re-edited in London by Mr Mathias, to which those may refer who wish to see this controversy handled with much critical accuracy. Tiraboschi, in highly praising the various merits of those two great poets, finds the "Gierusalemme" of Tasso, and the "Orlando Furioso" of Ariosto, so totally different in their nature, design and execution, as not to admit of being brought into comparison with each other. In various points, however, such as, fertility of invention, powerful description, and felicity of expression, his opinion seems rather to lean in favour of Ariosto.

† P. lili. ‡ Vol. III. part i. p. 284.

to it, I am now revising and correcting them for the last time. Will you permit me, madam, to inscribe them to you? The inscription shall be short and simple; and, if you please, in the following terms:

To
MRS MONTAGU,
These little Poems,
Now revised and corrected
For the last time,
Are,
With every Sentiment of
Esteem and Gratitude,
Most respectfully inscribed
By the AUTHOR.

"I have another favour to ask, which is, that, as I have mentioned the name of our lamented friend, Dr Gregory, in the concluding stanza of the second book of the "Minstrel," you will not forbid me to insert yours in the last stanza of the first. I had not the honour to be known to you when I published that first book; and, intending to put the name of a friend in the last stanza, but being then undetermined with respect to the person, I left in one of the lines a blank space, which has been continued in all the editions. That blank, with your permission, shall now be filled up; and then the stanza will run thus:

Here pause, my Gothic lyre, a little while;
The leisure hour is all that thou canst claim:
But on this verse if Montagu should smile,
New lays ere long shall animate thy frame:
And her applause to me is more than fame,
For still with truth accords her taste refined.
At lucre or renown let others aim;
I only wish to please the gentle mind,
Whom nature's charms inspire, and love of humankind.

"It would give me no little pleasure to see in the same poem the names of Mrs Montagu and Dr Gregory; two persons so dear to me, and who had so sincere a friendship for one another. Be-

sides, madam, I beg leave to put you in mind, that the first book of the poem was published at his desire, and the second at yours. So that I have more reasons than one for making this request. When this affair is settled, and the volume revised once more, I bid adieu to poetry for ever. I wish I could say of my voice what Milton said of his; that it is

> ——————Unchanged
> To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days,
> On evil days though fallen.——

But, alas! I am in the condition of Virgil's forlorn shepherd, to whom indeed it better becomes me to compare myself:

> *Omnia fert ætas, animum quoque. Sæpe ego longos*
> *Cantando puerum memini me condere soles.*
> *Nunc oblita mihi tot carmina: vox quoque Mœrim*
> *Jam fugit ipsa.——*

By the bye, I have a good mind to make this a motto to my little poetical volume."

LETTER CLXVIII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE HONOURABLE MR BARON GORDON.

Aberdeen, 7th March, 1784.

"I OUGHT to have acknowledged long ago the receipt of your most obliging favour of February 12th; but so many cross accidents have come in my way of late, that I had no time to settle to any thing. This has been a most dreary winter to me, and has, I believe, run away with several years of my life; but I will not at present trouble you with my lamentations.

"Let me rather congratulate you on the lengthening day, the dissolution of the frost, the approach of spring, and that hope of a long tract of good weather, which the late season of tempest may

encourage us to entertain. The snow disappears apace; and all this day it has rained without intermission. You will now get on horseback, with Rhætus, Pholus, Hylæus, and the rest of your brethren; and Virgil's idea will again be realized:

——————Vertice montis ab alto
Descendunt Centauri, Omolen Othrymque nivalem
Linquentes cursu rapido: dat euntibus ingens
Sylva locum, et magno cedunt virgulta fragore:

while we, two-legged and featherless animals, must be satisfied with the "*Secretum iter et fallentis semita vitæ.*"

"I wish I could also congratulate you on a political thaw, and the renovation of life and fluidity in our channels of public business; but there all circulation seems to be at an end. Surely we never expected to see such times as these. The constitution, I am afraid, will receive a shock; the precise nature of which, however, it is impossible to foresee. I admire the form of our government as much as any body; but I have long thought the democratical principle rather too predominant; and if it continue to gather strength, as it has done for these twenty years past, the independence of the two other branches of the legislature will be nothing but a name. Several of our ancient statesmen were of opinion, that England could never be ruined but by a parliament; and Montesquieu says, that this will happen, whenever the legislative power shall become more corrupt than the executive. From the executive, at present, I think we have nothing to fear; and I am persuaded, that the majority of the nation is of the same opinion.

"I hope Lord Monboddo will live till his metaphysical quartos equal in number the nine Muses, and the books of his friend Herodotus. I am told he is angry at my last book, and says I know nothing of the origin of language. If that be the case, it must be in a great measure his fault, as well as my misfortune; for I have read all that he has published on that subject; and I have the same access to Lucretius that he had.

"With all the terrors of *singula de nobis anni prædantur* before my eyes, I have not been able to apply to any sort of study this winter. I had neither time nor tranquillity for such employment.

"The Principal's work* proceeds apace; and a great work it will be: the greatest indeed, at least the most important, of any I have ever seen in that way. I have read three-fourths of it with vast pleasure, and I hope no little benefit."

The two following letters of Cowper's were given me, when unpublished, by Mr Hayley, with permission to make any use of them I pleased. He has since printed them himself in the third volume of the "Life of Cowper." But such delicate, yet emphatic praise, of Dr Beattie, from such a writer as Cowper, is too grateful to me to be passed over here.

LETTER CLXIX.

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ. TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.†

5th April, 1784.

"I THANKED you in my last for Johnson; I now thank you with more emphasis for Beattie,—the most agreeable and amiable writer I ever met with; the only author I have seen, whose critical and philosophical researches are diversified and embellished by a poetical imagination, that makes even the driest subject and the leanest, a feast for an epicure in books. He is so much at his ease, too, that his own character appears in every page; and which is very rare, we see not only the writer, but the man; and that man so gentle, so well tempered, so happy in his religion, and so humane in his philosophy, that it is necessary to love him, if one has any sense of what is lovely. If you have not his poem, called the "Minstrel," and cannot borrow it, I must beg you to buy it for me; for though I cannot afford to deal largely in so expensive a commodity as books, I must afford to purchase at least the poetical works of Beattie."

* Campbell's "Translation of the Four Gospels."

† Hayley's "Life of Cowper," Vol. III. p. 247.

LETTER CLXX.

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ. TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

26th April, 1784.

"I HAVE been lately employed in reading Beattie and Blair's "Lectures." The latter I have not yet finished. I find the former the most agreeable of the two; indeed the most entertaining writer upon dry subjects that I ever met with. His imagination is highly poetical, his language easy and elegant, and his manner so familiar, that we seem to be conversing with an old friend, on terms of the most social intercourse, while we read him. In Blair we find a scholar, in Beattie both a scholar and an amiable man; indeed so amiable, that I have wished for his acquaintance ever since I read his book."

LETTER CLXXI.

DR BEATTIE TO MISS VALENTINE.†

Edinburgh, 28th May, 1784.

"MANY interesting matters have happened since I have been here; and if I had time, I could write a wondrous long letter of news. The election of Scotch Peers; the meeting of Parliament; the state of parties; the old and the new ministry; Pitt and Fox; the General Assembly—all these things are now forgotten;

* Hayley's "Life of Cowper," Vol. III. p. 253.

† Miss Margaret Valentine, daughter of Mr John Valentine in Montrose, by Jean Beattie, sister of Dr Beattie, and now the wife of Mr Professor Glennie; to whose affectionate care, during several years, while she had the superintendence of his family, Dr Beattie was so highly indebted, and which he so gratefully remembered in his will.

and nothing here is spoken or thought of but Mrs Siddons. I have seen this wonderful person, not only on the stage, but in private company; for I passed two days with her at the Earl of Buchan's. Her powers in tragedy are beyond comparison great. I thought my old friend Garrick fell little or nothing short of theatrical perfection; and I have seen him in his prime, and in his highest characters: but Garrick never affected me half so much as Mrs Siddons has done. Indeed the heart that she cannot subdue must be made of other materials than flesh and blood. In the "Caledonian Mercury" you will see, from time to time, some critical observations on her action, which are very well written. The encomiums are high; but I assure you they are not above her merit. James too has seen her, and is transported. He never till now, he says, knew what acting was. It was very difficult to procure places; but by the kind attentions of the Dutchess of Gordon, and Lord and Lady Buchan, I was nobly accommodated, and in the very best seats in the house. In private company, Mrs Siddons is a modest, unassuming, sensible woman; of the gentlest and most elegant manners. Her moral character is not only unblemished, but exemplary. She is above the middle size, and I suppose about thirty-four years of age. Her countenance is the most interesting that can be; and, excepting the Dutchess of Gordon, the most beautiful I have ever seen. Her eyes and eye-brows are of the deepest black. She loves music, and is fond of the Scotch tunes; many of which I played to her on the violoncello. One of them ("She rose, and let me in," which you know is a favourite of mine,) made the tears start from her eyes. "Go on," said she to me, "and you will soon have your revenge;" meaning that I would draw as many tears from her as she had drawn from me. She sung "Queen Mary's Complaint" to admiration; and I had the honour to accompany her on the bass."

LETTER CLXXII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

London, 1st July, 1784.

"OUR friend Sir Joshua Reynolds is in perfect health and spirits. I dined with him the day after I came to town, and on Sunday last, when General Paoli, Dr Johnson, Mr Boswell, and several others were there. Sir Joshua's picture of Mrs Siddons is one of the greatest efforts of the pencil. He agrees with me, that she resembles Garrick in her countenance. Old Mr Sheridan, who piques himself not a little on having been instrumental in bringing forward that incomparable actress, assured me the other day, that in every comic character, from Lady Townly to Nell the cobler's wife, she is as great and as original as in tragedy. I asked Tom Davies, (the author of "Garrick's Life,") whether he could account for Garrick's neglect, or rather discouragement, of her. He imputed it to jealousy. How is it possible, said I, that Garrick could be jealous of a woman? "He would have been jealous of a child," answered he, "if that child had been a favourite of the public: to "my certain knowledge he would." Johnson has got the better of his late illness; but has the look of decline. Wine, I think, would do him good, but he cannot be prevailed on to drink it. He has, however, a voracious appetite for food. I verily believe, that on Sunday last he ate as much at dinner, as I have done in all for these ten days past. I sat an hour with Johnson the other day, and he spoke of you with great kindness;* and sympathized with my situation, in a manner that did honour to his feelings."

* Dr Johnson's acquaintance and mine first began when he came to Edinburgh in the year 1773, on his tour to the Hebrides. As he lived in the house of my friend, Mr Boswell, with whom I was extremely intimate, I was very much with Dr Johnson at that time; and ever after, when I had occasion to go to London, I uniformly experienced from him the utmost kindness and attention. Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr Langton, Mr Boswell, Dr Beattie, being

LETTER CLXXIII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Hunton, near Maidstone, Kent, 14th July, 1784.

"I AM now, my dear sir, arrived at a place, where external nature wears a face of the most profound tranquillity; and sit down to thank you for your two last letters, which came to hand the day before I left the town. It is so far fortunate, that Mrs B.'s removal to Musselburgh was attended with so little inconvenience. My confidence in your friendship and goodness entirely satisfies me, that you will soon put matters on a right footing. I lament, indeed, that your attention to me and mine should give you so much trouble; but the consciousness of doing good to the unfortunate and forlorn will in part reward you; and no mind ever possessed that consciousness in a more exquisite degree than yours has reason to do.

"The hot weather made London so disagreeable, that I was obliged to leave it before I had seen all my friends: I must make a longer stay when I return thither. I wish I had time and capacity to give you a description of this parsonage. It is delightfully situated about half-way down a hill fronting the south, about a mile from Coxheath. My windows command a prospect, extending southward about twelve miles, and from east to west not less, I suppose, than forty. In this whole space I do not see a single speck of ground that is not in the highest degree cultivated; for Coxheath is not in sight. The lawns in the neighbourhood, the hop-grounds, the rich verdure of the trees, and their endless variety, form a scenery so picturesque and so luxuriant, that it is not easy to fancy any thing finer. Add to this the cottages, churches, and villages, rising here and there among the trees, and scattered over the whole country;

our common friends, formed a sort of bond of union between Dr Johnson and me; to which circumstance I attributed much of the notice with which he honoured me. It is unnecessary for me to say here how highly I respected the talents and the virtues of that truly eminent and good man.

clumps of oaks, and other lofty trees, disposed in ten thousand different forms, and some of them visible in the horizon at the distance of more than ten miles; and you will have some idea of the beauty of Hunton. The only thing wanting is the murmur of running water; but we have some ponds and clear pools that glitter through the trees, and have a very pleasing effect. With abundance of shade, we have no damp nor fenny ground: and though the country looks at a distance like one continued grove, the trees do not press upon us: indeed I do not at present see one that I could wish removed. There is no road within sight, the hedges that overhang the highways being very high; so that we see neither travellers nor carriages, and indeed hardly any thing in motion; which conveys such an idea of peace and quiet, as I think I never was conscious of before; and forms a most striking contrast with the endless noise and restless multitudes of Piccadilly.

"But what pleases me most at Hunton is not now in view; for my friend, the Bishop of Chester, is gone out a riding. You are no stranger to the character of this amiable man. Mrs Porteus is not less amiable. Their house is the mansion of peace, piety, and cheerfulness. The Bishop has improved his parsonage and the grounds about it as much as they can be improved, and made it one of the pleasantest spots in England. The whole is bounded by a winding gravel walk, about half-a-mile in circumference. Close by, lives a most agreeable lady, with whom we all breakfasted to-day. She is the widow of Sir Roger Twisden; and, though not more than five-and-twenty, lives in this elegant retirement, and employs herself chiefly in the education of her daughter, a fine child of four years of age, who is mistress of her catechism, and reads wonderfully well. I expect soon to see our friend Mr Langton, as the Bishop proposes to send him an invitation, Rochester being only ten miles off. Tunbridge-wells is fifteen miles the other way."

LETTER CLXXIV.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Hunton, near Maidstone, Kent, 31st July, 1784.

"YOUR last letter having given me the fullest assurance, that the unfortunate object of our attention is now in circumstances as comfortable as her condition will admit of, I have been endeavouring to relieve my mind, for a time at least, from that load of anxiety which has so long oppressed it; and I already feel the happy consequences of this endeavour. My health is greatly improved; and, if this rheumatism would let me alone, I might almost say that I am quite well. Certain it is, that I have not been so well any time these four years. The tranquillity and beauty, the peace and the plenty, of this charming country, are a continual feast to my imagination; and I must be insensible, indeed, if the kindness, the cheerfulness, the piety, and the instructive conversation, of my excellent friend the Bishop of Chester and his amiable lady, did not powerfully operate in soothing my mind, and improving my heart. Those people of fashion in the neighbourhood, who visit the Bishop, and are visited by him, are a small but select society, and eminently distinguished for their piety, politeness, literature, and hospitality. Among them I have found some old friends whom I formerly knew in London, and have acquired some new ones, on whom I set a very high value. Mr Langton and Lady Rothes have just left us, after a visit of two days. You will readily imagine with what regret we parted with them. Our friend Langton is continually improving in virtue, learning, and every other thing that is good. I always admired and loved him; but now I love and admire him more than ever. We had much conversation about you.* I have given the Bishop a full account of my family transactions, particularly for the last twelvemonth. He highly approves of every thing that has been done; bestows great commendations on my

* See p. 339.

conduct; and has given me such advices as one would expect from his good sense and knowledge of the world. I have not yet fixed a day for my departure from this paradise; but I fear it must be in the course of next week. My friends urge me to prolong my stay, and I am much disposed to do so; but I must now remember, that the year begins to decline, and I have several other visits to make, and things to do, before I leave England. Meanwhile I shall, from time to time, let you know where I am, and what I am doing. Any letter you may favour me with, you will be pleased to put under the Bishop of Chester's cover.

"If I could give you an adequate idea of the way in which we pass our time at Hunton, I am sure you would be pleased with it. This is a rainy day, and I have nothing else to do at present: why, then, should I not make the trial?

"Our hour of breakfast is ten. Immediately before it, the Bishop calls his family together, prays with them, and gives them his blessing: the same thing is constantly done after supper, when we part for the night. In the intervals of breakfast, and in the evening, when there is no company, his Lordship sometimes reads to us in some entertaining book. After breakfast we separate, and amuse ourselves, as we think proper, till four, the hour of dinner. At six, when the weather is fair, we either walk, or make a visit to some of the clergy or gentry in the neighbourhood, and return about eight. We then have music, in which I am sorry to say, that I am almost the only performer. I have got a violoncello, and play Scotch tunes, and perform Handel's, Jackson's, and other songs, as well as I can; and my audience is very willing to be pleased. The Bishop and Mrs Porteus are both fond of music. These musical parties are often honoured with the company of the accomplished and amiable Lady Twisden, of whom I gave you some account in my last. Observe, that there are in this part of Kent no fewer than three ladies of that name: but the one I speak of is, Lady Twisden of Jennings, in the parish of Hunton; who, in the course of one year, was a maid, a wife, a widow, and a mother; whose husband, Sir Roger, died about five years ago; and who, though possessed of beauty and a large fortune, and not more than twenty-five years of age, has ever since lived in this retirement, employing herself partly in study, but chiefly in acts of piety and beneficence, and in the education of her little daughter, who is in-

deed a very fine child. I have just now before me Miss Hannah More's "Sacred Dramas," which I borrowed from Lady Twisden, and in which I observe that she has marked her favourite passages with a nicety of selection, that does great honour to her heart, as well as to her judgment. By the bye, Miss More* is an author of very considerable merit. My curiosity to see her works was excited by Johnson, who told me, with great solemnity, that she was "the most powerful versificatrix" in the English language.

"So much for our week-days. On Sundays at eleven, we repair to church. It is a small but neat building, with a pretty good ring of six bells. The congregation are a stout, well featured set of people, clean and neat in their dress, and most exemplary in the decorum with which they perform the several parts of public worship. As we walk up the area to the Bishop's pew, they all make on each side a profound obeisance; and the same as we return. The prayers are very well read by Mr Hill the curate, and the Bishop preaches. I need not tell you now, because I think I told you before, that Bishop Porteus is, in my opinion, the best preacher, in respect both of composition and the delivery, I have ever heard. In this capacity indeed he is universally admired, and many of the gentry come to hear him from the neighbouring parishes. After evening service, during the summer months, his Lordship generally delivers from his pew a catechetical lecture, addressed to the children, who for this purpose are drawn up in a line before him

* In a former part of these Memoirs,† some mention is made of the works of this amiable and excellent moralist, who still lives to instruct the world by her writings. It is a circumstance highly redounding to her praise, and well worthy of being recorded, that besides those admirable publications, calculated for the meridian of the upper circles of life, she thought it no degradation of her talents to employ her pen in the service of the lower classes of the people; and at a period when the press in Britain was teeming with the most infamous productions, purposely calculated to diffuse the principles of infidelity and sedition, she employed herself in composing short and familiar tracts, in the form of Tales, Dialogues, Ballads, suited to the capacities of the lower orders of society, and designed as an antidote to the poisonous tendency of the others. Those useful little publications were printed in a cheap form, in order that they might be the more widely distributed by well disposed persons; and it is to be hoped they were productive of the happiest effect. Mrs Hannah More's latest publication is entitled, "Hints towards forming the "Character of a young Princess."

† See p. 146.

along the area of the church. In these lectures he explains to them, in the simplest and clearest manner, yet with his usual elegance, the fundamental and essential principles of religion and morality; and concludes with an address to the more advanced in years. This institution of the Bishop's I greatly admire. When children see themselves so much attended to, and so much pains taken in instructing them, they cannot fail to look upon religion as a matter of importance; and, if they do so, it is not possible for them, considering the advantages they enjoy, to be ignorant of it. The catechetical examinations in the church of Scotland, such of them at least as I have seen, are extremely ill calculated for doing good; being encumbered with metaphysical distinctions, and expressed in a technical language, which to children are utterly unintelligible, and but little understood even by the most sagacious of the common people. The Bishop told me, that he chose to deliver this lecture from his pew, and without putting on lawn sleeves, that it might make the stronger impression upon the children; having observed, he said, that what is delivered from the pulpit, and with the usual formalities, is too apt to be considered, both by the young and the old, as a thing of course. On Sunday evening, he sometimes reads to his servants a brief and plain abstract of the Scripture history, somewhat similar to that which was lately published by Mrs Trimmer, and formerly by Lady Newhaven.

"In no other district of Great Britain, that I have seen, is there so little the appearance of poverty, and such indications of competence and satisfaction in the countenance and dress of the common people, as in this part of Kent. In this parish there is only one alehouse, the profits whereof are inconsiderable. The people are fond of cricket-matches, at which there is a great concourse of men, women, and children, with good store of ale and beer, cakes, ginger-bread, &c. One of these was solemnized a few nights ago in a field adjacent to the parish-church. It broke up about sunset, with much merriment, but without drunkenness or riot. The contest was between the men of Hunton and the men of Peckham; and the latter were victorious."

LETTER CLXXV.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Hunton, near Maidstone, Kent, 6th August, 1784.

"YOUR remarks on Mrs B's condition are equally striking and just; she is certainly not unhappy. And your observation, "that the days of human life, that are passed without sorrow and "without sin, are neither to be lamented when passing, nor regretted "when passed," has suggested to me several comfortable reflections. I should indeed be equally insensible both to moral and intellectual excellence, and to the picturesque beauties of nature, if the charming scenes, and the delightful society, in which I have passed these three weeks, had not soothed my mind into a sweet forgetfulness of care, and encouraged me to hope, that I am not in so forlorn a condition as I lately imagined.*

"The very countenance and behaviour of the common people of this district have had their effect in composing my mind and raising my spirits. I left the country, which is at all times barren and dreary, and which, when I left it, had not got the better of a two years scarcity, I had almost said, famine. The peace and the plenty of this region form the most striking contrast imaginable. Here the people are stout, and hearty, and active; their apparel is neat and decent; and their honest countenances are strongly expressive of content and competence. When Virgil says of his happy husbandmen, that they suffer no pain, either from pitying the poor, or from envying the rich, I am now satisfied, that he had no idea of either blaming or praising their Stoical apathy; his meaning certainly was, that the rich cannot be envied where all have enough, and that the poor cannot be pitied where poverty is unknown."

* This alludes to some family-distresses, to which he had been subjected.

LETTER CLXXVI.

DR BEATTIE TO DR PORTEUS, BISHOP OF CHESTER.

Sandleford, near Newbury, Berks, 18th August, 1784.

"IT is but a week since I exchanged the paradise of Hunton for the purgatory of London; and it seems almost a year: so much, during that short period, have I suffered from heat, and bustle, and bad air, and (what is worst of all) from sorrow of heart at parting with the best of friends. The month which I passed at Hunton was the happiest of my life; and I dare not flatter myself with the hope of such another. But I shall, as long as I live, derive satisfaction from recalling the persons, the conversations, and the scenery of it; which now occupy so large a space (if I may so express myself) in my imagination, that there is hardly room for the intrusion of any other idea.

"On Saturday and Sunday I was so overpowered by the intolerable heat of the town, that on Monday I was glad to make my escape a second time into the country. I passed the night at Reading, and yesterday at three o'clock arrived here; where I found Mrs Montagu and her nephew in perfect health, and very anxious in their inquiries after the health of Mrs Porteus and your Lordship. I had not been here five minutes, when the wind on a sudden shifted, with a violent squall, to the north-east, and the weather in an instant changed from very hot to very cold, as it still continues to be.

"This place is much improved since I saw it last. A great deal of brick-building and garden-wall is cleared away, and the lawn is opening very fast on every side. A little rivulet, that used to wander, unheard and unseen, through a venerable grove of oaks, is now collected into two large and beautiful pieces of water, round which the walks and ground are laid out to very great advantage indeed. The situation is on an eminence, with a gentle slope of a quarter-of-a-mile towards the south; and from every part of the lawn there is a beautiful prospect, first of a romantic village called

Newtown, and beyond that, of the Hampshire hills, some of which are tufted with wood, and others bare, and green, and smooth, to the top.

"At the distance of about thirty yards from the house of Sandleford, stood formerly an old chapel (for the place was once a priory), which for a century past or more had been neglected, or used as a place for lumber. This, Mrs Montagu has transformed into a very magnificent room, and joined to the main body of the house by a colonnade; which, expanding in the middle, and rising to the height of thirty feet at least, forms a noble drawing-room of an elliptical shape. When the doors of these rooms are thrown open, the walk, from end to end, is upwards of an hundred feet, and the heighth and breadth proportionable. The dining-room terminates in a very large window in the Gothic style, reaching from the floor almost to the roof, and looking into a grove of tall oaks, which, with a happy and very peculiar effect, retire from the eye in four rows, and give to this spacious apartment the appearance of a vast arbour. From this account, if I have done any justice to my idea, you will conclude, and justly too, that there is some little resemblance between this room and the new room at Hunton."

LETTER CLXXVII.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Edinburgh, 18th September, 1784.

"I CANNOT express my regret at being obliged to leave so soon the charming society at Sandleford; a society, in which I had so many opportunities of improving both my understanding and my heart; and in which I must have been callous indeed, if I had not been every moment conscious of the most delightful emotions that admiration and gratitude can inspire. I beg to be remembered, in the most affectionate terms, to your amiable and accomplished nephew, whom I found to be just what I wished, and what I expected. He is as good as I wish him to be, and I hope he will always be as happy.

"My journey was very pleasant. The weather was uncommonly fine; and the gay harvest-scenes, that every where surrounded me, conveyed such ideas of vivacity and gladness, as could not fail to have the happiest effects on my health and spirits: and I was surprisingly recovered before I got to Temple-Newsam,* in Yorkshire, where I passed ten days very agreeably. I then resumed my journey, and arrived here the day before yesterday. Most of my friends being gone to the country, I can have no temptation to remain long in Edinburgh, and am just on the eve of my departure for Aberdeen and Peterhead; from which last place I shall have the honour to write to you, as soon as I have had a conversation with Mrs Arbuthnot. I am impatient to see her, and to "make the widow's heart sing for joy," in the contemplation of your goodness."

In order the better to understand the following anecdote, which does equal credit to Dr Beattie and to Mrs Montagu, it is proper to mention that the worthy woman, to whom Mrs Montagu thus extended her beneficence, was a Mrs Arbuthnot, whose maiden name was Anne Hepburn, daughter of the Reverend Mr Alexander Hepburn, a minister of the episcopal church of Scotland, who had been domestic chaplain in the family of the Earl Marischal of Scotland, and preceptor to his sons, the late Earl Marischal and General Keith. She inherited from nature no inconsiderable portion of genius, and had enjoyed the benefit of a literary education. Her reading, however, had unfortunately taken a turn very unusual with the female sex; and she had imbibed a partiality for the sceptical philosophy; but of which she became completely cured, by the subsequent perusal of books of a better tendency, particularly Butler's "Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion," which she justly considered as a work of pre-eminent merit, and which continued to be her favourite study, next to the Scriptures, to her dying hour.

She was married in the year 1737, when twenty-eight, to Captain Andrew Arbuthnot; a name of which there were at that time several families in Peterhead, of the same kindred, distinguished for

* The seat of Lady Viscountess Irvine.

their great integrity and simplicity of manners. The celebrated Dr Arbuthnot was a branch of the family. Her husband was master of a vessel that traded from Peterhead to America; and, during one of his voyages, died of a fever at Charlestown, in South Carolina, in the year 1740. To add to this calamity, while the mate, who brought home the vessel to Peterhead, had come on shore, to communicate to her the melancholy tidings of her husband's death, by some accident the vessel was wrecked in the bay, and in her the whole of the captain's property was lost. Thus, in one hour, she found herself deprived of an affectionate husband, and left totally destitute, with the charge of a boy, a child of a year old.

After this dire calamity, Mrs Arbuthnot struggled hard to maintain herself and her son by her labour, and the kindness of her friends, who contrived to assist her in a concealed manner, so as not to hurt the delicacy of her feelings; and she has frequently been heard to say, she sometimes received aid as if it had dropt from heaven, without her knowing from what hand it came.

To fill up the measure of her misfortune, her only son, whom she had used every effort to educate, by means of a small bursary at the university of Aberdeen,* and who, by the interest of some of his father's relations, had obtained a commission in the army, in which he served with reputation, died at an early age in the West Indies, at a period when he had the prospect of future promotion, by which he might have been enabled to contribute to his mother's more comfortable subsistence. Thus bereft of every consolation, except what she derived from religion, and the soothing tenderness of her friends, she continued contentedly to strive with virtuous poverty during the whole course of her long widowhood.

While Mrs Arbuthnot had resided for a short time at Aberdeen, during the period of her son's education, she had become known to the late Dr John Gregory, to Dr Beattie, and several of the eminent literary characters of that time, who esteemed her for her taste in books, and respected her by reason of her virtues and exemplary piety. Dr Beattie, in particular, contracted an intimate friendship with Mrs Arbuthnot, with whom he constantly lodged during his annual visits to Peterhead. In her house he enjoyed tranquillity and perfect freedom; and, when he was disposed for

* See p. 12.

conversation, he had always the benefit of Mrs Arbuthnot's, whose cultivated understanding, and pious frame of mind, were exactly suited to his taste. To her opinion he generally submitted his literary productions before their publication; and he used to say, that he had seldom found her mistaken in her judgment of their merit. On representing her situation to Mrs Montagu, that lady was pleased to settle on her an annuity, which raised this poor, but grateful woman from her contented poverty, to a state of comparative affluence. Mrs Arbuthnot died 19th May, 1795, at the very advanced age of eighty-six.

LETTER CLXXVIII.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Peterhead, 11th October, 1784.

"I ARRIVED at Peterhead the first of October. I went instantly to Mrs Arbuthnot, whom I found in tolerable health, sitting solitary by her little fire, and amusing herself, as usual, with a book and her work; both which she has the art of attending to at the same time. She was the more pleased to see me, as my arrival was unexpected; for she had not heard that I was returned to Scotland. After she had asked all the customary questions, I told her, without betraying any emotion, or seeming to have any thing in view but her amusement, that if she was at leisure, I would tell her a story. I accordingly began; and, agreeably to the commission with which you honoured me, made a very long and circumstantial story of it, recapitulating, as far as my memory would enable me, every thing that passed in that conversation at Sandleford, of which she and her aunt, Mrs Cockburn,* were the subject. I saw she was greatly affected with the idea of your thinking so favourably of her aunt, and with your condescension in inquiring so minutely into her own story and character; but I did not throw out a single hint that could lead her to anticipate what was to follow. At

* A lady of considerable genius and learning, widow of the Reverend Mr Cockburn, one of the ministers of the episcopal chapel at Aberdeen, of whose writings two volumes were published, many years ago, now almost entirely forgotten.

last, when I found that her heart was thoroughly warmed, and recollected your observation, that the human heart in that state becomes malleable, I hastened to the conclusion, which I expressed in the simplest and fewest words possible; so that the whole struck her at one and the same instant. She attempted an exclamation, but it was inarticulate, and almost resembled a scream; the tears ran down her furrowed cheeks; and she could only say, "O dear, I "cannot speak one word!" and seemed almost exhausted with the effort that had produced that short sentence. I desired her not to attempt to speak, but to hear me a little further; and then told her, Madam, that such acts of beneficence were familiar things to you;* and mentioned some instances that had come to my knowledge, particularly that of Mrs Williams. She held up her eyes and hands, sometimes in silent adoration of Providence, and sometimes with the most passionate expressions of gratitude to her noble benefactress. In a word, Madam, she accepted your bounty in a way that did honour both to her understanding and to her feelings; and I left her to compose herself by silent meditation. Indeed I made haste to get away after I had executed my commission; for the scene was so delightfully affecting, that I could stand it no longer.

"When the news was known next day in the town, it diffused a very general joy; and many an honest heart invoked the blessing of heaven upon your head: for Mrs Arbuthnot's character is

* On this subject of Mrs Montagu's charitable distributions, it were injustice to her to omit inserting the following paragraph of a letter of her's to Dr Beattie, now lying before me. It alludes to the person mentioned in a letter of Dr Beattie's to her, p. 262.

"The Dutchess-dowager of Beaufort gave me a guinea for the little man "with the great soul, whom the vulgar at Aberdeen call a dwarf: be so good "as to give him a guinea, and charge it to my account; and if at any time he "is sick or distressed, remember that one, who is weary of seeing little minds "in great men, will gladly relieve one where this unseemly circumstance is "nobly reversed. Consider me always in the best light in which you can put "me, as the banker of the distressed; and at any time call on me for such "objects; and, in all senses of the word, *I will honour your bill*. Vulgar "wretchedness one relieves, because it is one's duty to do so; and one has a "certain degree of pleasure in it; but to assist merit in distress is an Epicurean feast; and indulge this luxury of taste in me, when any remarkable "object shall offer itself to your acquaintance."

exceedingly respected by all who know her; and her narrow circumstances have long been matter of general regret; as the delicacy of her mind was well known, which no doubt discouraged some persons from making a direct offer of their services, though indirectly, I believe, that some little matters have been done for her benefit. Yet, since her husband's death, which happened four-and-forty years ago, I know not whether she was at any time worth ten pounds a-year. With this small appointment she has constantly maintained the appearance of a gentlewoman, and has received the visits of the best people in the town and neighbourhood, whom she was always happy to entertain with a dish of tea: and among her visitors can reckon the (present) Dutchess of Gordon, the Countess of Errol, Lord Saltoun's family, Sir William Forbes, and many others of the best fashion. What is yet more strange, with this small appointment, she has always found means to be charitable to the poor; and when I have seen her dealing out her alms which was commonly a handful of oatmeal to each person, I know not how often she has put me in mind of the widow in the Gospel.

"There are several persons of her name in this town; and therefore it may be proper to inform you, that her distinguishing name is Mrs Andrew Arbuthnot. The name Arbuthnot is frequent in the neighbourhood. The great Dr John Arbuthnot, so eminent for his virtue, his learning, and his wit, was the grandson of a gentleman-farmer, who lived at a place called Scots-mill, three miles from this town; and Dr Arbuthnot and Captain Andrew Arbuthnot were second-cousins.

"I am afraid Mrs Arbuthnot will not long stand in need of your bounty; for she is seventy-six years of age, and suffers much from a cough and asthma. I was introduced to her about twenty years ago, by her nephew, Mr Arbuthnot of Edinburgh, and have since been as attentive to her as I could; of which she is so sensible; that sometimes, in the extravagance of her gratitude, she has called me *her good genius*. She actually gave me that appellation in the first draught of that letter which she wrote to you about a week ago, and which I hope, Madam, you have received; but I prevailed with her to change the phrase.

"Since I came hither I have been seven or eight times in the sea; and I think I am already the better for it. Only for three or

four hours after every plunge I am a little disconcerted by a confusion in the head, and a tremor in the hands; of which I am afraid you will see too many proofs in this letter: but that symptom will probably disappear, when I am a little more accustomed to salt-water. I shall remain here a fortnight longer; and then the business of the college will fix me in Aberdeen for the winter.

"Permit me now, Madam, to thank you for your most obliging letter of the 20th of September, which, after wandering long from place to place, has overtaken me at last. The harvest-scenes, which interest you so much, were also very interesting to me in the course of my journey through England; for the weather was the finest that could be, and every scythe and sickle, and the waggons, and the gleaners, were all in motion. With peculiar satisfaction I took notice of that laudable English custom, of permitting the poor and the infirm to glean the fields.

"How shall I thank you, Madam, and my amiable friend, Mr Montagu, for the kind invitation you give my son and me to pass some part of the ensuing spring at Sandleford! Be assured, it will be a grievous disappointment to us both, if we cannot get that matter accomplished. If my domestic affairs continue quiet, as I thank God they are at present, I hope we shall find no difficulty in it."

LETTER CLXXIX.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUTCHESS OF GORDON.

Peterhead, 17th October, 1784.

"IT flatters me very much to hear, that I am just now in favour with Lord Monboddo; for I lately heard a very different account. I am likewise happy to understand, from his comparing your Grace to Helen of Troy, that there is at least one *Modern* to whom he is willing to do justice: for, in that comparison, he certainly *intends* a very great compliment, though I cannot think there *is* a great one. I hope he will no longer insist on it, that Helen was seven feet high; and that he will devise some expedient, to

vindicate that lady's character from the aspersion of having been at least fourscore when Paris ran away with her: a paradox, which, for the honour of my friend Homer, I wish I were able to confute; though I cannot think of any other way of doing it, than by supposing, that there were two fair ladies of that name, one of whom, came to Troy, and the other eloped with Theseus about sixty years before."

LETTER CLXXX.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 31st January, 1785.

"THE sea-bath was of considerable service to me; and as this has been the most quiet winter I have passed these seven years, I am rather in better health than usual, and have of late been making some progress in a little work, of which you saw a sketch at Sandleford, and which you did me the honour to read and approve of. It was your approbation, and that of the Bishop of Chester and Sir William Forbes, that determined me to revise, correct, and enlarge it, with a view to publication. When finished, it will make two little volumes, of the size of Mr Jenyns's book on the "Internal Evidence of Christianity." My plan is more comprehensive than his, and takes in the external evidence of miracles and prophecy, as well as the internal. That you may see, Madam, somewhat more distinctly what I intend, I beg leave to transcribe the following paragraph from my introduction;

"I have met with little practical treatises, called, *Ten minutes* "*advice*—to those who are about to engage in such or such an en- "terprise. These performances may have their use, though they "do not contain a full detail of the business alluded to. I mean to "give *Two hours advice*—to that person, who may be in danger "from the books, or from the company of infidels, and who is "candid enough to desire to be informed, in few words, whe- "ther the evidence on the other side be so plausible, as to de- "serve the notice of a rational mind. If I shall satisfy him that it

"is, he will naturally lay me aside, and have recourse for farther "information, to those great authors, who have gone through the "whole subject, and *illustrated* and *proved* many things, which "the narrowness of my plan permits me only to *affirm*, or perhaps "only to *hint at*. And (which is far the most important part of the "whole procedure) he will at the same time reverently consult "those sacred oracles, which contain the history of divine revela-"tion; and which he will find more frequently, perhaps, and more "fully, than he is aware of, to carry their own evidence along with "them. And when he has done all this, in the spirit of candour, "with an humble and docile mind, and with a sincere desire to "know the truth and his duty, I may venture to assure him, that he "will not regret the time he has employed in the study; and that, "from the writings or conversation of unbelievers, his faith will "never be in danger any more."

"Your sentiments of Dr Arbuthnot agree entirely with mine. He had, I think, more wit and humour, and he certainly had much more virtue and learning, than either Pope or Swift. The eloquence and ostentation of Bolingbroke could never impose on Arbuthnot: he told his son, (whom I once had the honour to converse with at Richmond) that he knew Bolingbroke was an infidel, and a worthless vain man. The Doctor was the son of a clergyman of this country, and was educated at the Marischal College. His grandfather lived at a place called Scots-mill, in a romantic situation on the brink of a river, about three miles from Peterhead; a place which I often visit as classic ground, as being probably the place where the Doctor, when a school-boy, might often pass his holidays. I am informed, that the late Doctor Hunter bequeathed an original picture of Arbuthnot to that university; at which it should appear that he had been educated. If this be true, it is the property of the Marischal College. If I knew any thing of Dr Hunter's executors, I would write to them on the subject; as the picture has never appeared."

LETTER CLXXXI.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 7th February, 1785.

"THE quiet which I have enjoyed this winter, especially since I received your letter, has not only given me better health than usual, but has also left my mind at leisure to resume that little work on the "Evidence of Christianity," of which you saw a sketch last summer. All the introductory part is now written, and the part you saw is extended to double its former size. One entire section is added on the evidence arising from prophecy; and, in evincing the usefulness of revelation, I have had occasion to make some additional remarks on the insufficiency of the ancient philosophy, and the characters of the philosophers. Whether this work will ever be of use to others, I know not; but this I know, that it has been of considerable benefit to myself. For though, when I entered upon it, I understood my subject well enough to entertain no doubt of the goodness of my cause, yet I find, as I advance, new light continually breaking in upon me.

"My list of Scotticisms is also very much enlarged. I believe I shall print it here for the convenience of correcting the press, which, in the present state of the post-office, cannot be done by a person at a distance. If you see Mr Creech, please to ask what number of copies I shall send to him. It will be a pretty large pamphlet, and the price shall not exceed a shilling.

"Dr Campbell's preliminary dissertations are all finished: they alone will make a large quarto. I have read them all with great pleasure. They are a treasure of theological learning; and written with a degree of candour, as well as precision, of which in matters of this kind, the world has seen very few examples."

LETTER CLXXXII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. DR LAING.

Aberdeen, 13th February, 1785.

"YOU may believe that your accounts of Mrs Arbuthnot's recovery, so far exceeding what I expected, gave me the greatest pleasure. I see now, she will soon be what she was before; which I heartily pray may be the case. I was rather in low spirits about her when I wrote last to Mrs Montagu.

"In that lady's last letter to me, dated 21st of November, there are some sentences, which I shall set down here, as I know they will give Mrs Arbuthnot pleasure.

"My mind is so much engaged by Mrs Arbuthnot, I cannot "think of any thing else. Sometimes I think I am wicked, in not "being thankful enough, that I am at last admitted to her friend- "ship. I fret and repine, that I had not that happiness many years "sooner. Alas! what presumption is it in me to repine at this! "As if I deserved the heartfelt-delight of being in any degree "serviceable to one of the best of human beings. What pleasure "should I have had in her correspondence! While I read your ac- "count of her noble and delicate manner of receiving the friend- "ship of one, who had a high veneration for her and her aunt, I "*lived along the line*, and every word excited a sensation. I am "pleased to find, that by her husband she is so nearly allied to my "first favourite of all the *beaux esprits*, Dr Arbuthnot. He had "none of the peevish jealousies of Mr Pope, nor the harshness and "pride of Dr Swift. Conscious of more noble endowments, he "was not anxious to obtain the character of a wit. There is such "ease, and so natural an air in his writings, as prove him to have "been witty without effort or contrivance. I have heard my old "friend, Lord Bath, speak of him with great affection, as a most "worthy and amiable man, and as a companion more pleasant and "entertaining than either Pope or Swift. When I find much to "admire in an author, I always wish to hear he has qualities for

" which I may esteem and love him; and I have listened with " great pleasure to Lord Bath's and the late Lady Hervey's praises " of Dr Arbuthnot. With what delight must our friend at Peter- " head read the works of so amiable a relation! But the only real " and sincere happiness which remains for her"———

" What follows is a compliment to me, which, as I do not at all deserve, I shall not transcribe.

" In my answer you will suppose that I did not fail to express my approbation of her sentiments of Dr Arbuthnot, which coincide exactly with my own. I have told her of Scots-mill, and of my making pilgrimages to it as classic ground; and I have told her every thing I know of Dr Arbuthnot's history, so far as relates to this country. I believe, however, I omitted to tell her, that he and I are of the same county, and that I had the honour to be born within four miles of the place of his birth."

LETTER CLXXXIII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE HONOURABLE MR BARON GORDON.

Aberdeen, 28th February, 1785.

" The Dutchess of Gordon must, I think, have been mistaken, when she wrote to me some time ago that I was then in favour with Lord Monboddo. He never has pardoned me for calling Captain Cook a philosopher; and I am afraid never will. Besides, I think he did not use me quite well in the preface to his " Meta- " physic;" and when a man uses you ill, he seldom fails to hate you for it. However, I have not retorted. In my last book, when I combat his opinions, I seldom mention his name, and I never mention him without paying him a compliment. The third volume of " Metaphysic" I have not seen; but Principal Campbell gave me the other day such an account of it, as satisfies me, that it must be the most extraordinary performance that ever was written, and that he is determined to believe every thing that is incredible. I wonder whether he has ever read " The Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor."* His hatred of Johnson was singular; he

* In the " Arabian Nights Entertainment."

would not allow him to know any thing but Latin grammar, *and that*, says he, *I know as well as he does*. I never heard Johnson say any thing severe of him; though, when he mentioned his name, he generally

"Grinned horribly a ghastly smile."

Johnson was a good man, and did much good; and every one who knew him, or his works, must allow that he possessed extraordinary abilities. I long to see Mr Boswell's "Johnsoniana."

LETTER CLXXXIV.

DR BEATTIE TO DR PORTEUS, BISHOP OF CHESTER.

Aberdeen, 21st October, 1785.

I READ lately Sheridan's "Life of Swift." It is panegyric from beginning to end. Swift had many good as well as great qualities; but his character was surely, upon the whole very exceptionable. Mr Sheridan, however, will not admit that he had any fault. Even his brutality to Stella on her death-bed, which undoubtedly hastened her dissolution, his biographer endeavours to apologize for; and he has a great deal of very unsatisfactory reasoning on the subject of the *Yahoos*. The question is not, whether *that* man is not a very odious animal, who finds his own likeness in those filthy beings; but whether Swift did not intend his account of them as a satire on human nature, and an oblique censure of Providence itself in the formation of the human body and soul. That this was Swift's meaning, is to me as evident, as that he wrote the book: and yet I do not find my own likeness in the *Yahoos:* I only know, for I think I could prove, that Swift wished it to be understood, as his opinion, that the human species and the *Yahoo* are equally detestable. Mr Sheridan too is not, I think, over-candid in what he says of Lord Orrery; whose book, though not free from faults, contains some good criticism, and shows no little tenderness for the character of his hero.

" I long to see Dr Johnson's " Prayers and Meditations," and Mr Boswell's " Journey to the Hebrides;" but it will be a great while before they find their way to this remote corner.

" Has your Lordship read Dr Reid's " Essays on the intellec-
" tual Faculties of Man? Those readers who have been conversant in the modern philosophy of the mind, as it appears in the writings of Des Cartes, Malebranche, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, will be much entertained with this work, which does great honour to the sagacity and patience of the author, It contains the principles of his former book laid down on a larger scale, and applied to a greater variety of subjects. Ever since Plato, or rather Pythagoras, took it into his head, that the soul perceives only what is contiguous to, or inclosed in, its own substance, and consequently perceives not outward things themselves, but only ideas of them, this ideal system has been increasing in bulk and absurdity; and it is astonishing to see, that so many men of parts could be the dupes of it. All this rubbish is now cleared away, and a happy riddance it is. Dr Reid treats his opponents, and their tenets, with a respect and a solemnity, that sometimes tempt me to smile. His style is clear and simple; and his aversion to the word *idea* so great, that I think he never once uses it in delivering his own opinions. That little word has indeed been a source of much perplexity to metaphysicians; but it is easy to use it without ambiguity; and it has now established itself in the language so effectually, that we cannot well do without it. It was not without reason, that the learned Stillingfleet took the alarm at Lock's indiscreet use of that word. It was indeed an *ignis fatuus* to poor Mr Locke, and decoyed him, in spite of his excellent understanding, into a thousand pits and quagmires. Berkeley it bewildered still more: and it reduced David Hume to the condition of a certain old gentleman, of whom we read, that,

——————" Fluttering his pinions vain,
" Plumb down he dropped ten thousand fathom deep."

LETTER CLXXXV.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 15th November, 1785.

"PLEASE to accept, madam, of my best thanks for the elegant copy of the last edition of your work, which was forwarded to me by Mr Dilly. I am glad to see you have now claimed the property of the three beautiful dialogues; but it gives me concern to observe, that you have paid too much attention to my foolish remarks.

"The death of the Dutchess-Dowager of Portland* affected me most sensibly. I was no stranger to her virtues; I was under great obligations to them; and, from the tranquillity of her life, the cheerfulness of her temper, and the amusing nature of her favourite studies, I had flattered myself, that great ornament of her sex and country would live many years. Poor Mrs Delany;† I pitied her from my soul; but had I known all the truth, I should have been much more in pain for her. Having heard that she brought Dr Delany ten thousand pounds, which was a great fortune sixty years ago, I presumed that her circumstances were at least independent, if not opulent. I must blame her extraordinary request of being omitted in the Dutchess's will; and I wonder her Grace would comply with it. What a charming account you give me of their Majesties' generosity to Mrs Delany!‡ There was more in it than generosity: there was an affectionate sympathy, and a goodness and tenderness of heart, which does them more honour than even that high station, to which their pre-eminence in virtue, as well as the laws of their country, gives them so just a title. When the rage of party subsides, and misrepresentations are forgotten, how great, and how amiable, will those distinguished characters appear!

"Among the many curiosities which the Dutchess of Portland had collected, there was a volume, which you have no doubt seen, containing some prose-treatises in manuscript of the poet Prior.

* See p. 178. † See p. 193. ‡ Ibid.

Her Grace was so good as to permit me to read them, and I read them with great pleasure. One of them, a dialogue between Locke add Montaigne, is an admirable piece of ridicule on the subject of Locke's philosophy; and seemed to me, when I read it, to be, in wit and humour, not inferior even to the "Alma" itself. I took the liberty to say to the Dutchess, that it was pity they were not given to the world; but I found her rather averse to the publication. She said, she could not bear to see her old friend criticised and censured by such people as the Critical Reviewers, &c. I hope the work will no longer be suppressed.

"Mr Boswell has published what I am informed is an extraordinary book of the "Sayings of Dr Johnson." Johnson, no doubt, said many good things: but his want of temper, and violent prejudices, often divested him of his candour, and made him say what was not only improper, but in a very high degree censurable. I hope Mr Boswell has made the due distinction between what deserves to be known, and what ought to be forgotten."

The following letter from Dr Beattie to Mr Arbuthnot gives, I think, a very just criticism on Mr Boswell's "Tour to the Hebrides."

LETTER CLXXXVI.

DR BEATTIE TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 26th November, 1785.

"MR BOSWELL'S book is arrived at last, and I have just gone through it. He is very good to me, as Dr Johnson always was; and I am very grateful to both. But I cannot approve the plan of such a work. To publish a man's letters, or his conversation, without his consent, is not, in my opinion, quite fair: for how many things, in the hour of relaxation, or in friendly correspondence, does a man throw out, which he would never wish to hear of again; and what a restraint would it be on all social intercourse,

if one were to suppose that every word one utters would be entered in a register! Mr Boswell indeed says, that there are few men who need be under any apprehension of that sort. This is true; and the argument he founds on it would be good, if he had published nothing but what Dr Johnson and he said and did: for Johnson, it seems, knew, that the publication would be made, and did not object to it; but Mr B. has published the sayings and doings of other people, who never consented to any such thing; and who little thought, when they were doing their best to entertain and amuse the two travellers, that a story would be made of it, and laid before the public. I approve of the Greek proverb, that says, "I "hate a bottle-companion with a memory." If my friend, after eating a bit of mutton with me, should go to the coffee-house, and there give an account of every thing that had passed, I believe I should not take it well.

"Of Dr Johnson himself, as well as of others, many things are told which ought to have been suppressed; such, I mean, as are not in any respect remarkable, and such as seem to betray rather infirmity or captiousness than genius or virtue. Johnson said of "The Man of the World," that he found little or nothing in it. Why should this be recorded? Is there any wit in it; or is it likely to be of any use? The greatest dunce on earth is capable of saying as *good* a thing. Of a very promising young gentleman, to whom Dr Johnson was under the highest obligations, (for he had risqued his life in Johnson's service) and who, to the great grief of all who knew him, unfortunately perished at sea about ten years ago, Dr Johnson said, that it was pity he was not more intellectual. Why should this be recorded? I will allow, that one friend might, without blame, say this to another in confidence; but to publish it to the world, when it cannot possibly give pleasure to any person, and will probably give pain to some, is, in my judgment, neither wit nor gratitude: and I am sure Mr Boswell, who is a very good-natured man, would have seen it in this light, if he had given himself time to think of it. At Aberdeen the two travellers were most hospitably entertained, as they themselves acknowledge; and when they left it, they said to one another, that they had heard at Aberdeen nothing which deserved attention. There was nothing in *saying* this: but why is it recorded? For no reason that I can imagine, unless it be in order to return evil for good. I found so many

passages of this nature in the book, that upon the whole it left rather a disagreeable impression upon my mind; though I readily own there are many things in it which pleased me.

"The Bishop of Chester's thoughts on this subject are so pertinent and so well expressed, that I am sure you will like to see them: "You will," says his Lordship in a letter which I received yesterday, "be entertained with Mr Boswell's book, and edified "with some of Johnson's prayers; but you will wish that many "things in both those publications had been omitted: and, per- "haps, if they had not existed at all, it would have been better still. "Johnson's friends will absolutely kill him with kindness. His "own character, if left to itself, would naturally raise him very high "in the estimation of mankind; but by loading it with panegyric, "anecdotes, lives, journals, &c. and by hanging round it even all "his little foibles and infirmities, they will sink it lower in the "opinion of the best judges of merit. I saw lately a letter from "Mrs Piozzi, (late Mrs Thrale) in which she announces her Anec- "dotes of Dr Johnson to be published this winter; and after that "are to follow his Letters to her, &c. Mr Boswell also is to give "us his Life; and Sir John Hawkins is writing another to be pre- "fixed to a complete edition of his works. Our modest and worthy "friend, Mr Langton, is the only one who observes a profound si- "lence on this occasion; and yet no one could speak to better pur- "pose, if he pleased, and if he thought it would answer any good "end."

"Johnson's harsh and foolish censure of Mrs Montagu's book does not surprise me; for I have heard him speak contemptuously of it. It is, for all that, one of the best, most original, and most elegant, pieces of criticism in our language or any other. Johnson had many of the talents of a critic; but his want of temper, his violent prejudices, and something, I am afraid, of an envious turn of mind, made him often a very unfair one. Mrs Montagu was very kind to him; but Mrs Montagu has more wit than any body; and Johnson could not bear that any person should be thought to have wit but himself. Even Lord Chesterfield, and, what is more strange, even Mr Burke, he would not allow to have wit. He preferred Smollet to Fielding. He would not grant that Armstrong's poem on "Health," or the tragedy of "Douglas," had any merit. He told me, that he never read Milton through, till he was obliged to

do it, in order to gather words for his Dictionary. He spoke very peevishly of the masque of Comus; and when I urged that there was a great deal of exquisite poetry in it; "Yes," said he, "but it "is like gold hid under a rock;" to which I made no reply; for indeed I did not well understand it. Pray, did you ever see Mr Potter's "Remarks on Johnson's Lives of the Poets?" It is very well worth reading.

"By a Latin letter which I lately received from Holland, I am informed, that Dutch translations of the first part of my last book, and of my "Remarks on Laughter," have been published, the one at Haerlem, the other at Dort. I am greatly obliged to the Dutch. The "Essay on Truth," they translated twelve years ago; and I have a copy of the version, which I am told, by those who understand the language, is very exact.

"I become every day more and more doubtful of the propriety of publishing the Scotticisms. Our language (I mean the English) is degenerating very fast; and many phrases, which I know to be Scottish idioms, have got into it of late years: so that many of my strictures are liable to be opposed by authorities which the world accounts unexceptionable. However, I shall send you the manuscript, since you desire it, and let you dispose of it as you please."

On this subject of Mr Boswell's "Tour to the Hebrides," I likewise received a letter, some time after, from Dr Beattie, which I shall insert here. But as it refers to one of mine, to which it is in answer; and as that letter contains some information respecting the publication of that work of Mr Boswell's which I am not ill pleased should be known, I shall venture, for the first and only time, to insert in this work a letter of my own. I found it among some hundreds, which Dr Beattie had preserved: for he seems seldom or never to have destroyed the letters he received from his friends.

LETTER CLXXXVII.

SIR WILLIAM FORBES TO DR BEATTIE.

Edinburgh, 9th January, 1786.

"Boswell's* book, which I dare say you have seen before now, contains many things that *might*, and several that *ought* to have been omitted. In regard to those of the first description, Mr Boswell seems to have adopted the idea of the writers on glass, so well described by Lord Hailes in one of his papers in the "World," who think a fact ought to be recorded merely because it is a fact: for surely he has retained a great deal of conversation neither instructive nor entertaining; although other parts again are highly so. As to the offensive passages, I really do not believe that he considered them in that light when he gave them to the press: for I do believe him to have been sincere in his declaration, that it was not his intention to hurt any mortal; and my memory serves me to recollect many passages of the original MS. which

* Mr Boswell's acquaintance and mine began at a very early period of life, and an intimate correspondence continued between us ever after. It scarcely requires to be mentioned here, that he was the chosen friend of General Paoli and of Dr Johnson. The circle of his acquaintance among the learned, the witty, and indeed among men of all ranks and professions, was extremely extensive, as his talents were considerable, and his convivial powers made his company much in request. His warmth of heart towards his friends, was very great; and I have known few men who possessed a stronger sense of piety, or more fervent devotion (tinctured, no doubt, with some little share of superstition, which had probably been in some degree fostered by his habits of intimacy with Dr Johnson) perhaps not always sufficient to regulate his imagination or direct his conduct, yet still genuine, and founded both in his understanding and his heart. His "Life" of that extraordinary man, with all the faults with which it has been charged, must be allowed to be one of the most characteristic and entertaining biographical works in the English language. For Mr Boswell I entertained a sincere regard, which he returned by the strongest proof in his power to confer by leaving me the guardian of his children. He died in London, 19th May, 1795, in the fifty-fifth year of his age.

he has omitted for that very reason; and in his second edition, which is now printed, he tells me he has omitted a good deal of the first. I have been accused of being his adviser to print the book, from a letter of mine towards the conclusion; which, by the bye, he inserted without my knowledge or permission: but that letter merely related to a perusal of the MS., at a time when I had not the most distant idea of his printing his Journal. I have also been accused of having written that complimentary letter, because of the eulogium with which he has been pleased to honour me in his book: but that passage, in which I am mentioned in so flattering a manner, was not in the original MS. which I saw.* As his "Life of Dr Johnson" will probably be a work of a similar nature, I have taken the liberty of strongly enjoining him to be more careful what he inserts, so as not to make to himself enemies, or give pain to any person whom he may have occasion to mention: and I hope he will do so, as he seems sorry for some parts of the other.

"I have been much pleased with Dr Johnson's "Prayers and "Meditations:" they show him to have been a man of sincere and fervent piety: but I think Mr Strahan has been much to blame in printing the MS. *verbatim*. I do not think an editor is at liberty to *add* a single iota to the work of his author; but surely there could have been no crime in Mr Strahan's retrenching occasionally a few things, which throw in some degree an air of ridicule on a work of so serious a nature; and which, by giving cause for scoffing, will perhaps diminish the good effects the book might otherwise be expected to produce: had he likewise substituted Elizabeth, (which Boswell tells me was Mrs Johnson's real name) in the place of such a ridiculous appellation as *Tetty*, surely no man could have found fault with the change. It is somewhat extraordinary to see a mind so vigorous as his was, distressing itself with terrors on subjects apparently of no great importance, while the whole tenor of his life had been so irreproachable and useful to the world by his writings; which one should think are of sufficient magnitude to render unnecessary his self-accusation of idleness.

"It would give you pleasure, I am sure, to hear of Mr William Gregory's† having got a living. He is a most excellent young

* He has mentioned this in his second edition, p. 524.

† Son of the late Dr John Gregory. He is since dead.

man; and has well supported Dr Reid's character of him, when in a letter to me while he was at Glasgow college, the Doctor called him *one of the incorruptibles*. The living is worth about 160*l*. and it is a good thing to have such a patron as the Archbishop of Canterbury."

LETTER CLXXXVIII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 12th February, 1786.

"IT is with much concern, and with the most cordial sympathy, that I condole with Lady Forbes and you on your late afflictions. I pray God they may be sanctified to you; that you may be strengthened to bear them without injury to your health; and that the dear survivors may be spared for a comfort to their parents, a blessing to one another, and an ornament to society. Those, whom a wise Providence has been pleased to take away, have been soon released from their warfare, and have now an eternity of happiness before them, without the possibility of change. This consideration will sooth your melancholy, and will shortly, I trust, enable you to overcome it.

"What you say of Mr Boswell coincides with my sentiments exactly. I am convinced he meant no harm; but many things in his book are injudicious, and must create him enemies, and are really injurious to the memory of Dr Johnson. Johnson's faults were balanced by many and great virtues; and when that is the case, the virtues only should be remembered, and the faults entirely forgotten. But in this book, Johnson's want of temper, want of candour, obstinacy in dispute, and rage of contradiction, (for most of his speeches began with *No, Sir,*) are minutely recorded and exemplified. I cannot but take notice of a very illiberal saying of Johnson with respect to the late Mr Strahan, (Mr Boswell has politely concealed the name) who was a man to whom Johnson had been much obliged, and whom, on account of his abilities and virtues, as well as rank in life, every one who knew him, and Johnson,

as well as others, acknowledged to be a most respectable character. See page 340.* I have seen the letter mentioned by Dr Gerard, and I have seen many other letters from Bishop Warburton to Mr Strahan. They were very particularly acquainted; and Mr Strahan's merit entitled him to be on a footing of intimacy with any Bishop, or any British subject. He was eminently skilled in composition and the English language, excelled in the epistolary style, had corrected (as he told me himself) the phraseology of both Mr Hume and Dr Robertson; he was a faithful friend, and his great knowledge of the world and of business made him a very useful one. His friendship for Mr Hume did not prevent his being a very warm friend of mine. He told me some curious anecdotes of Mr Hume, which I took down in writing at the time, and which, if you please, I shall send you.

"Johnson's book of Prayers is, as Macbeth says, "a sorry sight." In themselves the prayers have merit; but the best passages are taken from the "Book of Common Prayer," which is indeed a rich and inexhaustible fund. To compose forms of devotion is a most improving exercise; and to publish them may be beneficial: but to publish *a history* of one's own devotions and alms, is something so like "praying in the corners of the streets," that I cannot think Johnson would have consented to it till want of health had impaired his faculties. Some of the memorandums are such as cannot be read without pain and pity. Others are of a different character. To set down in a devotional diary, "*N. B.* "I dined to-day on herring and potatoes," is a most extraordinary incongruity."

* After so severe a reproof from Dr Beattie, it is proper, for his sake, to insert here the paragraph from Mr Boswell's "Journal" which occasioned it.

"Dr Gerard told us, that an eminent printer was very intimate with "Warburton. *Johnson*, "Why, Sir, he has printed some of his works, "and, perhaps, bought the property of some of them. The intimacy is "such as one of the Professors here may have with one of the carpenters, "who is repairing the college," &c. &c.

LETTER CLXXXIX.

DR BEATTIE TO THE BISHOP OF WORCESTER.

Aberdeen, 21st July, 1786.

"HAD not my right hand been disabled by a bruise, of which I have not yet entirely got the better, I should have sooner returned my grateful acknowledgments to your Lordship, for your most obliging letter. Your approbation of my little book* does me the greatest honour; and will have much influence in rendering it successful. Lord Hailes, with whom I passed a day not long ago, is also well pleased with it; and, in general, it seems likely to meet with a reception far more favourable than I had reason to expect. It is indeed a very brief summary; but my friends are pleased to think it has on that account a better chance, in these days, to be read than if it had been of a greater size.

"Before I put it to the press, I was very anxious to see your Lordship's "Sermons," (preached at Lincoln's-inn) of which I had heard such an account as greatly raised my curiosity. But even the best books find their way slowly into this remote corner. I have read the book once and again with great delight; and it will be my own fault if I am not the better for it as long as I live. My approbation can add nothing to its fame; yet I must beg leave to say, that I particularly admire your happy talent in expounding difficult texts, and the perspicuity, conciseness, and elegance, of your style: which I look upon as the perfection of pulpit-eloquence; being equally captivating to the learned, and intelligible to the simple.

"Though my health will not now permit me to attempt a long journey, yet I still flatter myself with the hope, that I shall one day

* "Evidences of the Christian Religion, briefly and plainly stated;" in which Dr Beattie has given, if not a regular deduction, a concise and most useful summary, of the most striking and popular arguments, in elegant and perspicuous language, in support of the divine origin of the Gospel. It will be difficult, perhaps, to find any other book on the subject that contains more valuable matter, so well arranged, in so small a compass, as this little treatise of Dr Beattie's; which although meant chiefly for those who are just finishing their academical course, will be perused at any age, by the serious and devout, with equal profit and delight.

avail myself of your kind invitation, and pay my duty to your Lordship at Hartlebury. The last time I was in England I did seriously intend it, but was prevented by illness."

In the year 1786 there were published at Aberdeen, "Outlines "of a Plan for uniting the King's and Marischal Colleges of Old "and New Aberdeen, with a view of rendering the System of Edu- "cation there more complete."

A similar idea of an union had been started in the year 1747, in 1754, and in 1770; but on each of those occasions, such opposition had arisen to it from one quarter or another, that it had always fallen to the ground. It was now thought that it might be revived with better hopes of success; either from the measure being better understood, or from the conditions on which it was proposed to be carried into effect being rendered less exceptionable than they had formerly been. It is proper to mention, that those two universities, although situated within a mile of each other, are two perfectly distinct and separate establishments, as much so as the universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, each having her own professors, separate revenues, and separate jurisdictions. As neither the one nor the other contained a system of education so perfect, nor advantages so considerable when separate, as it was thought they might be made to embrace, if united, and one common seminary of learning were formed out of the two, many persons were of opinion, that such an union, if it could be brought about upon fair and equitable principles, would tend greatly to the benefit of both. It was thought, for example, that one professor for each branch of science would be fully equal to teach, when united, the small number of students attendant on each separate class; and that the classes, by containing a larger number, though not too great a body of students, would probably draw into one class a greater proportion of young men of superior abilities, whereby a greater emulation would be excited; while the professors, whose incomes depend chiefly on their class-fees, would find their emoluments augmented by their increased number of students, whom it would be their object and endeavour to render as numerous, as in their power, by their industry and attention. Nor would this be all

the advantage which this newly-modelled seminary of learning would derive from such an union; for, by means of the double salaries paid at present to the professors of the same branch, one of each of which it was proposed to abolish, as the present incumbents should die out, new professorships might be established in the united universities, which do not at present exist in either. Thus, a school of medicine, and another of law, might be introduced at Aberdeen, as well as at Glasgow and Edinburgh, to the very great advantage of the northern part of the kingdom. Professorships of astronomy, agriculture, and other branches not taught there at present, might also be established; a botanic garden might be created; the libraries, as well as the museum and philosophical apparatus, augmented by additional purchases: and thus students, from the remoter parts of the country, might have the advantage of finding a more complete system of education open to them nearer home, without being put to the trouble and expence of going to look for it in a southern part of the country.

Such were the plausible arguments urged in favour of the union, by the Principal and Professors of Marischal College, by whom the plan was at this time revived. They were joined, however, by no more than two of the Professors of the neighbouring university; the Principal and all the others declaring themselves strenuously adverse to the measure, as tending to a complete overthrow of the constitution of their university, of which they said the revenues and the patronage were by much the most considerable; and therefore the advantages to be derived from such an union would be all on the side of Marischal College.

Whether these were the real motives on the part of the Professors of King's College, or whether, from the omission of any ceremonious punctilios on the part of the Professors of Marischal College towards their brethren of King's, in the manner of first opening the business, the opposition is to be attributed, it is not easy now to say. But that Dr Beattie thought favourably of the measure, there can be no question; as he appears to have taken considerable pains to bring it about; and that he must have believed it possible to accomplish such an union, without encroaching on the rights and privileges of either party, his known love of justice will not allow us to doubt. As it was obvious, however, that no union could possibly take place between two separate and independent societies,

without the hearty concurrence of at least a majority of each, after some farther fruitless attempts, which served only to widen the difference between the two, the measure was finally abandoned as hopeless; and has never since been revived. Whether such an union be really practicable, or whether, if to be attained, it would be for the benefit of science in general, are points foreign from the present memoir. It ought not to be omitted, however, that as such an union could not be set on foot without even the attempt being productive of some bad humour among the members of both colleges, as soon as the question was fairly laid to rest, Dr Beattie exerted himself strenuously, and not unsuccesafully, in allaying any heat that had arisen. Having an annual custom of dining together, at the first return of their yearly meeting, Dr Beattie laboured, that all that had past on the subject should be buried in oblivion, and nothing prevail but harmony and good humour.*

LETTER CXC.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUTCHESS OF GORDON.

Peterhead, 28th July, 1786.

"I HAVE the pleasure to inform your Grace, though you have no doubt heard by other means, that the scheme for the union of our two colleges goes on wonderfully well, and that the greater part of the nobility and gentry in this part of the kingdom seem very much inclined to promote it. The petition to the King is subscribed by the whole Marischal College, (the rector and dean of faculty included) and by two of the other college. I wrote the other day to solicit Lord Kinnoull's approbation and advice, which I am confident will not be with held. We can never be sufficiently thankful to the Duke of Gordon and your Grace for the honour

* In the course of this business, a variety of papers, memoirs, cases, plans, (but none of them written by Dr Beattie,) were printed and circulated by both universities, where the arguments on each side are detailed. Of these I have in my possession a large collection. But I am surprised so little is preserved on the subject in the "Scots Magazine," although professedly a repository of intelligence regarding Scottish transactions.

you have done us in entering so warmly into our views; and I rejoice in the hope, that we shall, in a little time, under the influence of so high a patronage, succeed in a measure, which most of us have had at heart these many years, and which every friend to literature, and the north of Scotland, unless blinded by prejudice and self-interest, must see to be so very desirable.

"I have deferred sending my little book * to the library of Gordon-castle, till a new and more correct edition should come out; which will probably be soon, as it has been a great while at the press. The first edition was all sold in about five weeks, and has met with a reception much more favourable than I could have expected.

LETTER CXCI.

DR BENJAMIN RUSH TO DR BEATTIE.

Philadelphia, 1st August, 1786.

"THE American revolution, which divided the British empire, made no breach in the republic of letters. As a proof of this, a stranger to your person, and a citizen of a country lately hostile to yours, has expressed his obligations to you for the knowledge and pleasure he has derived from your excellent writings, by procuring your admission into the American Philosophical Society, a certificate of which, subscribed by our illustrious president, Dr Franklin, and the other officers of the Society, you will receive by the next vessel that sails to any port in North-Britain from this city.

"The stranger, alluded to, finished his studies in medicine in Edinburgh in the year 1769, and has ever since taught chemistry and medicine in the college of Philadelphia. His name (with the greatest respect for yours) is,

"BENJAMIN RUSH."

* "Evidences of the Christian Religion."

LETTER CXCII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUTCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 10th September, 1786.

"PERMIT me now to return my most grateful acknowledgments to your Grace and the Duke, for your goodness in interesting yourselves so much in my recovery. When I saw the letter to Dr Livingston, your kind attention drew tears from my eyes. I have had a pretty severe illness. The fever came on about six weeks ago; and I am still so weak, that it fatigues me to walk up or down stairs, and exhausts me to write the shortest letter upon the most ordinary business.

"I know not what others are, but I begin to be low-spirited on the subject of the union. Mr ******'s last letter seems, as Milton says, to cast

"Ominous conjecture on the whole success."

Lord ****** too appears to have some unfavourable prepossessions. Lord **** is very old and infirm; and I much doubt, whether we can with propriety give him the trouble of taking an active part in the affair. I am very willing to believe, that the present state of my nerves may incline me more to despondence than there is any good reason to; and I heartily wish this may be the case. Whatever may be the result, the Marischal College have no reason to be ashamed of what they have done. The very general approbation which their conduct has received from the most respectable part of the community, does them the greatest honour, and will, I trust, prepare matters for bringing forward an union one time or other, and probably at a period not very remote. That is now clearly ascertained, which was never so well known before, that the voice of the public declares for an union in the most explicit terms."

LETTER CXCIII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 14th September, 1786.

"I AM indebted to you for two very affectionate and entertaining letters, and will endeavour to answer them as soon as my head and hand are a little better settled. At present I can hardly hold a pen.

"I am very happy to hear of your visit to Hunton. I often wished the Bishop of Chester and you acquainted. He wrote me word of his having met with Lady Forbes and you, and of the great satisfaction he had in the hopes of a visit from you. You would like Mrs Porteus greatly. Her cheerfulness, good sense, and goodness of heart, make her a most excellent companion for the Bishop, and exceedingly beloved by all who know her. As you were but a day at Hunton, you would see but little of Lady Twisden, who is as remarkable for modesty as for every other virtue; but if you had been with her for some days, you would have found her most worthy of that character which I think I formerly gave you of her.

"We have had much talk about uniting our two colleges. I was desired to write to you about it long ago; but would not then trouble you, as Lady Forbes was indisposed; and of late I have not been able to write. The union is much approved of by the country in general; but it is opposed by the Principal and six of the Professors of King's College. I shall tell you more about it very soon, and send you some memorials and other papers."

The following letter relates to a plan which had been formed by some of Dr Beattie's friends here, of publishing the prose-works of Addison in a separate collection. The admirers of that eminent moralist, and truly classical writer, had long lamented, that, in order

to be gratified with a perusal of his excellent compositions, they were forced to look for them in scattered parts and in separate volumes. There is, indeed, a magnificent edition, in quarto, by Baskerville, of the writings of Addison; but that book contains not only his prose, but his poetical pieces, which are certainly not the best of his performances; and it is likewise so expensive, as to be above the reach of many who would otherwise wish to be purchasers; and who would also be gratified by a perusal of some anecdotes of his life not generally to be met with. Such a selection, therefore, from his prose-writings only, together with a critique on his style and manner of writing, it was thought would be a most acceptable present to the admirers of Addison. Nor did we know any one so fit for the task as Dr Beattie, whose good taste, added to his enthusiastic admiration of that author, whom he had chosen as his own model in composition, qualified him highly for such an undertaking. On its being proposed to him, he most cheerfully agreed to set about it without delay; and even promised to himself much gratification in the execution.

The original intention was to have published the whole of Addison's prose-works, to which Dr Beattie proposed to prefix a biographical and critical preface, in the latter part of which he meant to insert a *Critique* on the style of Addison, so as to have shown its peculiar merits, as well as to have pointed out historically the changes which the English language has undergone from time to time, and the hazard to which it is exposed of being debased and corrupted by the innovations which have of late years found their way into the style of our best and most esteemed writers. Such a preface, however, if properly executed, he found would run the length of half a volume, and would require both more time and application than the state of his health and other avocations would permit him to bestow upon it. He was therefore compelled, though reluctantly, to abandon a plan, from the performance of which he had looked forward with such high expectations of intellectual delight. He gave hopes, indeed, that he might resume the design, at some future period, of commenting on the prose-writings of Addison; but he did not live to carry it into execution. All that he was able to do, therefore, on occasion of the re-publication of these periodical papers, (to which were added his "Evi-"dences of the Christian Religion," was to subjoin Tickell's

"Life of Addison" entire, which, though brief, is authentic, and extremely well written, together with some extracts from Dr Johnson's "Remarks on Addison's Prose." This Dr Beattie has accordingly done; adding a few notes to make up for any material deficiency there may be thought to be in Tickell's narrative, and illustrating Johnson's critique by a few occasional annotations. Slight as those additions are which Dr Beattie has made to his stock of materials, with which he originally set to work, the admirer of Addison will be much gratified by some new information which he was ignorant of before, and to which Dr Beattie has given a degree of authenticity, by adhering, even in this instance, to his general practice of putting his name to every thing he wrote.*

LETTER CXCIV.

DR BEATTIE TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 13th November, 1786.

"I MEAN instantly to set about the preface to Addison. I beg you will inform me, whether the printing of the edition be actually begun, and when Mr Creech thinks it will be finished. As my preface will be printed last, it will come in good time (I suppose) five or six months hence. I intend to give in it, first, a brief account of Addison's life (in which I shall have occasion to contradict some of Johnson's remarks); and, secondly, a sort of criticism on his writings, particularly his prose-style. On this head, it will fall in my way to speak of the present rage of innovation in our language; a subject which I have touched upon in the preface to the Scotticisms, but which I purpose to consider with some minuteness in the other preface.

* This work was printed at Edinburgh, in four volumes, 8vo. for W. Creech and J. Sibbald, 1790.

LETTER CXCV.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 30th November, 1786.

"I AM greatly obliged to you, my dear Sir, for your very kind letter of the 18th, no part of which gave me more pleasure, than the account you favour me with of your son's proficiency. You did very right in sending him to pass some months in England. At his age it is not so difficult, as it comes to be afterwards, to get the better of a provincial dialect; and I am very happy to understand, that he has acquired so much of the English pronunciation; Greek and Latin he had in sufficient abundance before. It will likewise be of singular use to him to have been in a strange country for a little time; for such we may call England, notwithstanding that we all live under the same government; so very different are the customs, and modes both of thinking and speaking, from those of Scotland. His passing a few months in France next year, will tend still more to his improvement, by presenting him with a system of manners still more different from those of his own country, and by preparing him betimes for a correct pronunciation of the French tongue. Youth is the best time both for acquiring languages, and for getting the better of those national prejudices, which are so apt to adhere to the man who has never stirred from home; and which are equally unfriendly to Christian charity, to true politeness, and, I may add, to the advancement of a man's interest even in this world.

"The opposition to the projected scheme of uniting the colleges is much to be regretted; but, as the voice of the country is so clearly on the side of those who favour the union, I would fain hope, that in time the opposition may become more faint, and at last be withdrawn altogether. At present matters seem to be at a stand. The arguments on both sides have been prosecuted with a minuteness, and perhaps too with an acrimony, which was unnecessary; but such things must always be expected in such cases: and, were

an union, after all, to take place, I am persuaded, that those altercations would be immediately forgotten, and that we should be better friends than ever. Such revolutions happen in love and friendship: and why may they not happen in a contest like the present? in which, properly speaking, there is no hostility; the only thing aimed at, being to make both societies more respectable than ever they were before, without injury to any private interest whatever. I have the pleasure to inform you, that Marischal College is this year more crowded with students, than it has been any time these fifty years. Our public hall is indeed quite full; so that there is reason to think it was never better filled than at present. The other college is not so flourishing. Their students are said to be under ninety; ours to be above an hundred and forty. I will not say that this account is perfectly exact, but have reason to think it is nearly so.

"I am just now reading Lord Hailes's new performance against Mr Gibbon. There is much learning in it, and great knowledge of the subject; but I wish he would make his reasoning a little more pointed and popular. He often leaves his reader to draw the conclusions from his premises; which is the most inoffensive way of conducting controversy, but not perhaps the most instructive. It gives me also concern to see so very able and so learned a writer affect sometimes the new-fangled cant style.

"Your account of Sir J. Reynolds' new picture is very entertaining. It is an unpromising subject; but Sir Joshua's invention will supply every thing."*

* The Infant-Hercules strangling the Serpents; a large picture painted for the late Empress of Russia, and now at St Petersburgh. It is indeed a wonderful effort of the pencil of that great master. The hero himself is represented as a stout, gruff, chubbed boy, squeezing the animals by the throat, one in each hand, with the utmost unconcern; while the passion of fear is finely expressed in the countenances of the mother and attendants, and admirably diversified: that of the mother being solely for her child, while that of the attendants is evidently for themselves. Tiresias stands by, a truly venerable figure: and Juno appears in the clouds, anxiously waiting the success of her experiment.

LETTER CXCVI.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 22d January, 1787.

"MISS Bowdler's "Essays"* are just come to hand, and give me a very high idea both of the head and of the heart of the

* We are informed by a prefatory advertisement, that these "Poems "and Essays," the production of Miss Jane Bowdler, were written to relieve the tedious hours of pain and sickness. To the humble and pious Christian, who feels the pressure of distress, and seeks in religion that support and consolation which nothing else can bestow, they present an example of patience and resignation which no sufferings could conquer. Nor is it the pride of Stoicism that these pages exhibit. The author felt, with the keenest sensibility, the uncommon misfortune which condemned her for ten years in the prime of life to constantly increasing sufferings; but she found in the principles which are here laid down, such motives of consolation, as rendered her superior to all the sorrows of life, and to the lingering tortures of a most painful death. Of the singular merit of these "Essays" there can be no higher praise than that of an amiable and excellent moralist,† who has declared, that he considered this performance as a production of inestimable value to every reader, who has a taste for elegant composition, or a heart disposed to profit by wise instruction; instruction the more forcible, as she was the bright example of her own excellent precepts. The genuine principles of Christian ethics, undebased by the smallest alloy of bigotry or superstition, are judiciously pursued through their important consequences, and applied with singular accuracy to the various purposes of moral agency. The language and the sentiments are level to the most *ordinary* understanding, at the same time that the most *improved* will find much to admire in both.

Miss Bowdler was the eldest daughter of Thomas Bowdler, Esq. of Ashley, a gentleman of independent fortune, who, being bred to no profession, resided chiefly at Bath, where he gave much of his time to study, and the company of men of letters. He was a person of great piety and worth. As an unequivocal proof of his singular attention to the strict discharge of religious duties, he constantly retained a domestic chaplain, who regularly officiated in his family. He died at Bath, 2d May, 1785.

† See a letter inserted soon after the death of Miss Bowdler, and the publication of the "Essays," in the "Bath Chronicle," by William Melmoth, Esq. author of the "Letters of Sir "Thomas Fitzosborne," &c. &c.

excellent author. Such examples of piety and resignation rarely occur; and the person who publishes them does an important service to mankind. The preface too, though short, is admirably

Although Mr Bowdler, from his attachment to books, may in some degree be considered as a literary character, he never, as far as I know, appeared in print, like most of his family. Besides the amiable sufferer, the author of these "Essays," their mother, Mrs Bowdler, daughter of Sir John Cotton, was possessed of very extraordinary talents. Such was her proficiency as a scholar, that she was even well acquainted with the Greek and Hebrew languages; and thus read the Scriptures, which were her favourite study, in the original. Yet, with all this store of knowledge, she never intruded it into conversation, nor made any useless parade of her superior accomplishments. She printed, at first anonymously, but since her death they have been published by her family with her name, "Practical "Observations on the Revelation of St John." Whatever may be thought of Mrs Bowdler's lucubrations themselves, upon this mysterious book, we cannot but be pleased with the practical inferences which her work contains. She died at Bath, 10th May, 1797, in her eightieth year.

Their eldest son, the present Mr Bowdler, a name justly respected by every friend of virtue and religion, published in the year 1797, an excellent and well-timed pamphlet in a plain and familiar style, entitled, "Reform "or Ruin," at a period when our national concerns wore a very gloomy aspect, yet when national dissipation, apparently the certain forerunner of our destruction as an empire, seemed arrived at its height.

This title of Mr Bowdler's pamphlet deceived many. At the time it was published, multiplied pamphlets came out on the subject of *political reform*; and some people were probably induced to peruse this of Mr Bowdler's, who little suspected that the "reform" he recommended was *a reformation of manners*, not of *the constitution*.

Mr Thomas Bowdler, the late Mr Bowdler's second son (the gentleman mentioned in Dr Beattie's letter) published "Letters written from Hol-"land, 1787, containing a History of the Expedition into Holland under the "Duke of Brunswick, in the year 1786:" and Miss Harriet Bowdler has instructed the world by a volume, published anonymously, of practical "Sermons on the Doctrines and Duties of Christianity," which do equal honour to her piety, her taste, and her knowledge of the human heart; and which cannot be carefully perused by any one, without exciting in the mind the best and most useful impressions of duty. There yet remains to be mentioned another daughter of Mr Bowdler, who, though she has never published any literary work, possesses a taste and an understanding highly cultivated, with powers of epistolary composition, which speak her to be mistress of talents, were she to employ them for the press, by no means inferior to those of the other branches of this extraordinary family. I have long enjoyed the happiness of her classical and instructive correspondence.

written, and give such an emphasis to what follows in the book, as cannot fail to recommend religion to the most inattentive, if they will only take the trouble to read this truly valuable work. I was wonderfully struck and pleased with the beauty and propriety of the motto from Ariosto; and it brings tears into my eyes when I consider it as an apostrophe to a departed saint. I beg you will return my most grateful and affectionate acknowledgments to the lady who honours me with this present, which I value more than I can express, which I trust has already done me good, and which I am sure will do me a great deal more, if it is not my own fault. I am no stranger to the character of this lady's family, having often heard of it from Mrs Montagu. And, if I mistake not, a brother of her's once did me the honour to sup at my house in Aberdeen, in company with Mrs Montagu's nephew, Mr Robinson. He seemed to be an excellent young man, and I was much pleased with his conversation. I should be very happy to hear that he is alive and well.

I have had two letters lately from the Bishop of Chester, in both which he and Mrs Porteus desire to be particularly remembered to Lady Forbes and you. He informs me, that the subscription-price of the new edition of Shakespeare adorned with drawings by the best hands, from designs by the best painters, will not be less than one hundred guineas for each copy. At this rate, one shall give the price of an ordinary book for a *sight* of this. However, magnificent works of this kind do honour to the nation that produces them, and raise a laudable emulation among artists, and at the same time serve to give foreigners a high idea of the genius in honour of whom they are undertaken. The French pique themselves and very justly, on a splendid and elegant edition of La Fontaine's "Fables," which is sold for twelve or fourteen pounds; but that work will be nothing to this.[1] Clarke's edition of "Cæsar" was lately sold by auction in London for forty-eight pounds: it is indeed a most splendid work, and the "Spectator" speaks of it as the glory of the British press; but the original price was only twelve pounds. The finest copy I ever saw of this edition is in the library at Gordon Castle."

LETTER CXCVII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE HONOURABLE MR BARON GORDON.

Aberdeen, 5th March, 1787.

"I AM happy to inform you, that on the first of March you were unanimously re-elected Lord-Rector of Marischal College for the ensuing year. Your assessors are also re-elected; and Major Mercer is re-elected Dean of Faculty. This matter was conducted with the greatest unanimity. All the college, students as well as professors, are very sensible of the obligations they are under to you, for your constant attention to the interests of the society.

"You are very partial, my dear Sir, to my son's little attempt in Latin poetry; which, however, I acknowledge to be rather extraordinary, considering his years and opportunities. It may show, that classical learning is not quite so much neglected at Marischal College, as some of our southern neighbours would wish the public to believe. He has employed himself, during this winter, in a variety of compositions, both Latin and English, both prose and verse; all which he will be solicitous to lay before his rector, when a proper opportunity occurs.

"Finding that he is fond of a studious and academical life, I have been revolving a plan for him, which to you, as a friend, and as the first (acting) magistrate in the university, I would have mentioned two or three weeks ago, if I had been able to write. I have laid it before the college, in a letter, a copy whereof I beg leave to send you:

"*To the Principal and other Professors of Marischal College.*

"GENTLEMEN,

"I take the liberty to address you on a subject, which is interesting to me, and of some importance to the college; and I do it in writing because it is reasonable that ye should deliberate upon it when I am not present.

" The state of my health for some time past, though it has not " as yet hindered me from performing the duties of my office, has " however been such as leads me often to think both of an assistant " and of a successor; and many obvious reasons make me wish, " that one and the same person may serve in both capacities. It is " natural for me to prefer my son to others in a matter of this kind, " as he likes an academical and studious life; and as he is, if not " sufficiently qualified, at least as well qualified for the office as I " was, after I had been seven years a professor.

" It is by no means my intention to give over teaching. On " the contrary, I will never permit any body to teach my class, as " long as I am able to teach it. For habits of seven-and-twenty " years standing are not easily got the better of; and I find so much " amusement in this business, which on all ordinary occasions gives " me no trouble, that, if I were to retire from it, I am certain that " my health would be much worse than it is.

" But it would be a great relief to my mind, to know, that, in " the event of my being confined by illness, the business of the class " would suffer no interruption: and I presume, that, if my assistant " were to appear in it *as a professor*, it would be no difficult matter " for him, with my advice and influence, to establish his authority. " If he live to see the beginning of next session, my son will be in " the twentieth year of his age.

" Of his behaviour and proficiency while at college, I need not " say any thing; as that is sufficiently known to those professors " under whom he studied, and from whom he received so many " marks of particular attention and kindness. It may be proper, " however, that I lay before the college some things concerning " him, which they cannot be supposed to know. And, in doing " this, I do nothing more for him, than justice would require me to " do for any other young man in his circumstances, and whom I " equally well knew.

" Having for some years had this employment in view for him, " I took pains to give such a direction to his studies, as might im- " perceptibly prepare him for it. And I am well enough pleased " to find, that, though he has been a very assiduous student in all " the parts of learning that are taught here, the bent of his genius " seems to lie towards theology, classical learning, morality, poetry, " and criticism. In Greek, he has read Homer's Iliad and Odys-

"sey, the Batrachomyomachia, and a great part of Hesiod, the "greatest part of Xenephon, the Phedo of Plato, six or seven books "of Euclid, Arrian's History of Alexander, two Plays of Sophocles, "part of Herodotus and Plutarch, of the Septuagint and New Tes- "tament, the Ethics and Poetics of Aristotle, Longinus, several of "the Odes of Pindar, &c. Latin he understands better than any "other person of his years I have ever known; he wrote it pretty "correctly when he was a boy; and, as I have sometimes con- "versed with him in that language, I know that with a little prac- "tice he could speak it easily: he is also making good progress "in the French tongue. From his early years I accustomed him "to read no books but good ones, and to study every thing he read "with grammatical and critical accuracy. The moral sciences, as "far as I teach them, he knows very well; and, as he has a metho- "dical head and ready elocution, I flatter myself a little practice "would make him a good teacher. Specimens of his composition, "both Latin and English, both verse and prose, shall be laid before "the college, if they desire it.

"To all this it may not perhaps be impertinent to add, that as "he has passed part of several summers in Edinburgh, and two in "London and other parts of England, and visited wherever I visited, "he may be supposed to have seen a little of the world; of which, "though he is rather silent in company, I find he has been no in- "accurate observer.

"If the college agree to recommend him to his Majesty, as a "person fit to be appointed my assistant and successor, I would "farther request, that it may be done as soon as possible. This, "I think, would be an advantage to the college, as well as to him and "me. For if he were once sure of the place, I would make him "lay other studies aside for some time, and employ himself in pre- "paring a course of lectures; which, as all my papers are open to "him, he would not find it a difficult matter to do. I could also "teach him how to make many improvements in my plan, which "I have long had in view, but could never execute for want of "health.

"I need not suggest to my colleagues the propriety of keeping "this affair secret. Were it to be talked of, and after all to mis- "carry, it would hurt my son's interest, and make him feel the dis- "appointment the more heavily. He knows nothing of this appli-

"cation; nor do I intend that he shall know any thing of it, till I "see what the issue is likely to be. I am," &c.

"To this letter the college returned a very polite answer to this purpose: That they were so well satisfied with my son's proficiency and character, that they would immediately, notwithstanding his youth, grant the recommendation I requested, if it were not for the present critical state of the business of the union. They therefore desired me to let the matter rest a little, till the issue of that affair could be more certainly foreseen. In this I thankfully acquiesced.

"However, that I might if possible secure a majority, in the event of the union taking place, I mentioned my scheme to Mr Professor ****. He entered very warmly into my views, and mentioned the thing in confidence to Dr ****** and Mr *******. They were as favourable as I could have expected; and, though they made no promise, which indeed was not solicited, they spoke in very strong terms of what they were pleased to call the delicacy of my conduct with respect to my colleagues and to them. They seemed to think, that I might have carried my point by a private application to the Crown in my own name. This might perhaps be true; but I would not do a thing so disrespectful to the Marischal College.

"I threatened you with a long letter, and you see I have kept my word. But, as my almanack tells me that your terms are over, I hope you will excuse me. You are interested in this business in more respects than one; for I took the liberty some time ago to execute a deed, in which you and Sir William Forbes, and some other gentlemen, are named the guardians of my two boys; as I think I told you before."

LETTER CXCVII.

DR BEATTIE TO MISS VALENTINE.

London, 20th July, 1787.

"I AM just returned from Windsor, where I passed three days. I went thither, partly to see some friends, but chiefly that

I might pay my respects to the King and Queen. They both received me in the most gracious manner. I saw the King first on the Terrace, where he knew me at first sight, and did me the honour to converse with me a considerable time. Next morning I saw him again at prayers in his chapel, where he was pleased to introduce me to the Queen, who inquired very kindly after my health; observed, that many years had passed since she saw me last; regretted the bad weather which I had met with at Windsor, (for it rained incessantly) which, said she, has made your friends see less of you than they wished; and, after some other conversation, her Majesty and the Princess Elizabeth, who attended her, made a slight curtsey, and stepped into the carriage that waited for them at the chapel-door. The King remained with us for some time longer, and talked of various matters, particularly the union of the colleges. He asked whether I was for or against it. I told him I was a friend to the union. But Lord Kinnoull, said he, is violent against it (this, by the bye, I did not know before). The King spoke jocularly of my having become fat: I remember the time, said he, when you were as lean as Dr **** there, pointing to a gentleman who was standing by. You look very well, (said his Majesty to me) and I am convinced you are well, if you would only think so: do, Dr Heberden, said the King, convince Dr Beattie that he is in perfect health. (Dr Heberden was also standing by). I have been endeavouring, Sir, returned the Doctor, to do so. After two such attestations of my health, as those of the King and Dr Heberden, I suppose I need not say more on that subject. The truth is, I am better than I was. The giddiness has not troubled me but one day since I came to London.

"At Windsor I met with several other friends, particularly Lady Pembroke, Mrs Delany, Mr and Mrs De Luc; and I was often with the famous Miss Burney, (author of "Cecilia") who has got an office in the Queen's household, and is one of the most agreeable young women I have met with; has great vivacity, joined with a most unassuming gentleness and simplicity of manners.

"I passed an afternoon a few days ago with Lord Rodney. I was very glad to meet with that celebrated veteran, and much pleased with his conversation. He is of the middle size, rather lean, has handsome features for an old man, piercing blue eyes, and is very well bred."

LETTER CXCVIII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Hunton, near Maidstone, 7th August, 1787.

"I CAME to Hunton the 28th of last month. Of the scenery of that beautiful place I need say nothing to you, who are well acquainted with it. Every thing is so exactly the same that it was, and my memory of every thing is so accurate, that the three years which have intervened since I was last here, seem to have dwindled into as many days. The Bishop and Mrs Porteus are perfectly well, and desire their best respects to Lady Forbes and you.

"Last week we had a visit from a gentleman, (Mr Boissier) in whose history there are some particulars, which I think will entertain you. He is a man of fortune, and of a French family, about fifty years of age; was born in England and commonly resides at Bath, but has passed a great part of his time abroad, where it is evident that he has kept the very best company. He speaks Italian, Spanish, and French, and is well conversant in literature; and has so much of the French vivacity, that if he had not spoken English with the propriety of a native, I should have taken him for a Frenchman. As Moses was trained up in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, it was this gentleman's chance to be educated in all the folly of French philosophy: he was indeed an avowed, nay a barefaced, infidel. In this temper of mind he went to hear the Bishop of Chester preach at Bath, about two years ago. The text was, "Truly this was the Son of God." He was so much struck with the Bishop's eloquence and reasoning, that he made no scruple to declare to his friends, that his mind was changed, and that he was determined to study the Christian religion with candour, and without delay. An acquaintance soon took place between the Bishop and him, and they were mutually pleased with each other. Books were put into his hands, and among others my little book.* To

* "Evidences of the Christian Religion, briefly and plainly stated." See p. 404.

shorten my story he is now a sincere Christian; and is just going to publish a "Vindication of Christianity," which he has translated from the French of Mons. Bonnet. This work I have seen, and think very highly of it, as I do of the author and translator, who is truly a very agreeable, sensible, well-bred, man. The sermon which, by the providence of God, was the cause of this conversion, the Bishop, at my desire, preached to us last Sunday. I never in my life heard more animated eloquence, or a more forcible piece of argumentation; and the Bishop exceeded himself in the delivery of it."*

In addition to the accumulated evils with which Dr Beattie had been long afflicted, of his own bad health, and the total subversion of his domestic happiness, arising from his wife's incurable malady, he was soon to experience another and a most weighty domestic calamity, in the loss of his eldest son, of the commencement of whose illness, which at last brought him to the grave, his father gives the following affecting account.

LETTER CXCIX.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 17th November, 1787.

"AFTER having been for so many months a wanderer, I am at last become stationary, and sit down to give a brief account of what has befallen me since I tore myself away from Sandleford. The chief reason of my leaving, so soon as I did, that delightful place, and still more delightful society, was, though I did not then mention it, the state of my son's health. He had at that time symptoms of approaching illness, particularly an unconquerable

* The discourse here mentioned is the 14th in the second volume of the Bishop of London's "Sermons."

sensation of cold in his hands and feet; which made me anxious to put him, as soon as possible, under the care of my medical friends in London. He was taken ill, as I expected, first more slightly, and afterwards with such violence, and so many alarming appearances, that for several days he seemed to be in great danger. My friend, Dr Lettsom, attended him with his usual humanity; and, as soon as he thought it safe to remove from London, advised me to begin my journey. We travelled very slowly, and had every advantage that could be derived from good roads and good weather; but, though he bore the motion of the carriage well enough, he continued to be so weak, that I was often at a loss to determine whether I should proceed or stop. He himself wished to get forward, especially to get to Morpeth, where Dr Keith lives, a particular friend of ours, of whose affectionate temper and medical abilities we both have the highest opinion. At Morpeth we arrived at last, and were so lucky as to find our friend at home, who ordered something which did much good; but the weakness still continued, and the disorder appeared to be only alleviated, but by no means, removed. At Edinburgh, where we rested ten days, I was advised to take him to Peterhead, which I did accordingly; and the air and mineral-water of that place had so good an effect, that, by the end of October, when we were obliged to return home, I thought him, and he thought himself, perfectly recovered. He has been regularly inducted into his new office: but I do not intend that he shall have any thing to do this year, but to amuse himself, and recover strength; as I find myself well enough to manage all the business without difficulty. Indeed I have now better health than I remember to have enjoyed for some years. And it would be strange if it were otherwise, considering the very great attention and kindness which I met with at Sandleford and Hunton; and, since my return to the North, at Gordon Castle, where I made a visit of three weeks, while my son was at Peterhead. The Dutchess desired me to present to you her best respects; which, however, I presume her Grace will deliver in person, as she is now on her way to London, where she means to pass the winter.

"At Peterhead I gave Mrs Arbuthnot the money which you committed to my care, and I was happy to find her wonderfully well, considering her great age. I need not tell you with what gratitude she acknowledged your bounty, nor how anxiously

minute she was in her inquiries after your health, and that of Mr and Mrs Montagu, and their lovely child. She is naturally of an inquisitive turn, as solitary people of good parts generally are; but, where her heart and affections are engaged, there is no end of her interrogatories. It gives me no little pleasure to observe, how much to the better her poor old house is changed, since she has had the honour to be under your patronage. The roof, which was entirely decayed, has undergone a thorough repair; her moth-eaten tables and chairs, which were on the point of falling to pieces by their own weight, have given place to a set of new ones, not fine indeed, but neat and substantial; the smoky roofs of her few apartments are cleaned and whitewashed, and the mouldiness of her walls concealed by a decent covering of printed paper. In her dress I perceive little or no change; for in that respect, even in her worst days, she always contrived to appear like a gentlewoman.

"I learned a few days ago, by a letter from his Lordship, that our excellent friend the Bishop of Chester, is promoted to the see of London. Few things could have given me so much pleasure. This is a station in which his great talents for business, and for doing good, will find ample scope; yet so as not to take him to such a distance from his friends, or subject him to such bodily fatigue, as the duties of his former diocese often made necessary."

LETTER CC.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 10th December, 1787.

"I WISHED to have written to you by Mr ******, but when he was here I was ill. My son on that occasion took upon him, for the first time, the management of the class, and acquitted himself not only to my satisfaction and theirs, but also to his own. It was not my intention that he should appear in his new character till next winter; but I am glad he has had this trial, as it has satisfied him that he is equal to his business. However, I do not mean that he shall either *assist* or *succeed* me, as long as I can prevent it. He

is greatly obliged to you for your kind concern about him, and desires to offer his humble service. His health was improved by Peterhead; but he is not robust, and I am obliged to exert my authority in moderating his application to study.

"Every body must approve greatly of your sending Mr Forbes abroad, previously to his entering on business. Next to a good conscience, nothing tends more to the happiness of life, than habits of activity and industry begun in early youth, so as to settle into a permanent disposition before one arrives at manhood: and I never see, without pity, a young man of fortune who is bred to no business.

"The friends you inquire after, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr Langton, &c. were all well when I left London; but I did not this year see so much of them as usual, as my health would not permit me to be much in town. I regret exceedingly my not having had an opportunity to pay my respects to Miss Bowdler.

"The passage in the "Lounger," to which she objects, seems to me to be not very accurate; and I am not sure that I understand it. There are men, and those too of masculine minds, who prefer Virgil to Homer; Mr Burke is one: and there are others who prefer Metastasio to Shakespeare, and Tasso to Milton. Johnson told me he never read Milton through, till he read him in order to gather words for his "Dictionary;" and though he has spoken *civilly* of him in his "Lives," it is well known that he did not do so in conversation. On the other hand, I have known women, whose sentiments were the same with mine, and I suppose with the "Lounger's" in regard to those great authors; and who, for all that, had minds as delicate, and as truly feminine, as any of their sex. Few women have the means of judging with precision of the comparative merit of Virgil and Homer; for, in order to do that, it is absolutely necessary to throw all translations aside, and read them in their own language. Pope's translation is a very pleasing poem, and I believe a great favourite with the fair sex; but has nothing of Homer but the story and the characters, the *manner* being totally different: Dryden's "Virgil" is not a very pleasing book, and conveys not any tolerable idea of the original; of whose tenderness, pathos, and delicacy, and uniform majesty of expression and numbers, Dryden had no just relish, and whose language he did not understand so perfectly as he ought to have done.

"Of the superiority of male to female minds, much has been said and written, but perhaps in too general terms. In what relates to the peculiar business and duty of either sex, the genius of that sex will, I believe, be found to have the superiority. A man, though he could suckle, would not make so good a nurse as a woman; and though the woman were in bodily strength equal to the man, there are in her constitution many things which would make her less fit, than he is, for what may be called the external economy of a family. Matters of learning, taste, and science, are not more the *natural* province of the one sex than of the other; and, with regard to these, were they to have the same education and opportunities, the minds of the two sexes would be found to approach more nearly to equality. The same *education*, however, they cannot have, because each must be trained up for its own *peculiar* business; nor the same *opportunities*, because many scenes of observation are open to men, from which women are, by their reserve and modesty, excluded, and some open to women, to which men are, with great propriety, though for a different reason, denied admittance. If one were to enter into the detail of all these particulars, I imagine it would not be difficult to say, what sorts of writing and parts of learning the two sexes might cultivate with *equal* success, and in what women would be *superior* to men, and men *superior* to women; and the inferences, as they occur to me at present, would, if I mistake not, receive confirmation from the history of literature."

LETTER CCI.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 5th March, 1788.

"I SCARCE remember when my attention was so much engrossed by a number of little matters, as it has been for the last two months. This must be my apology for not sooner acknowledging the receipt of your very kind and affecting letter. After what Dr Hay told me last summer, I had no hopes of your son's recovery;

but the account of his death gave me pain, as I well knew what Lady Forbes and you would suffer on that occasion. You have been tried with many severe afflictions of the same kind; but have borne them as became you; so that they will, in their consequences, prove matter of everlasting triumph.

"It is with great pleasure I see your name in the newspapers, subjoined to a petition to the House of Commons in behalf of the poor negroes. The society, to which I belong, resolved some time ago to present a similar petition, but the thing is delayed till we hear from our chancellor on the subject; and he is now very infirm, so that I fear we shall be too late in our application. I wrote a "Discourse on Slavery," particularly that of the negroes, about ten years ago, and had thoughts lately of revising and publishing it. So much was I in earnest, that I had actually transcribed about a fourth part of it; when, having occasion to consult some authorities, which were not at hand, I foresaw, that, let me be ever so diligent, the fate of Mr. Wilberforce's intended motion on this subject, would, in all probability, be determined before my little book could be got ready; and so I dropped the scheme, at least for the present: which I have the less reason to regret, as I had little to say which has not been said by others, who may be thought to have had better means of information. I earnestly pray, that our legislature may have the grace to do something effectual in this business, so as to clear the British character of a stain, which is indeed of the blackest die. The freest nation and best natured people on earth, are, as matters now stand, the patrons of slavery, and of a slavery more severe than is warranted by the laws of France or Spain, or of any other country in Europe. What an inconsistency is this! and what a reproach! I am not, however, one of those who think, that our negroes ought immediately to be made free. That would be dangerous, and is, I fear, impracticable. But to mitigate in the mean time the horrors of their slavery, and to prepare matters for a gradual abolition of it, seems to me to be neither dangerous nor difficult.

"I have been looking into Dr Reid's book on "The Active Powers of Man." It is written with his usual perspicuity and acuteness; is in some parts very entertaining; and to me, who have been obliged to think so much on those subjects, is very interesting throughout. The question concerning Liberty and Ne-

cessity is very fully discussed, and very ably; and, I think, nothing more needs be said about it. I could have wished that Dr Reid had given a fuller enumeration of the passions, and been a little more particular in illustrating the duties of morality. But his manner is, in all his writings, more turned to speculation than to practical philosophy; which may be owing to his having employed himself so much in the study of Locke, Hume, Berkeley, and other theorists; and partly, no doubt, to the habits of study and modes of conversation which were fashionable in this country in his younger days. If I were not personally acquainted with the Doctor, I should conclude, from his books, that he was rather too warm an admirer of Mr. Hume. He confutes, it is true, some of his opinions; but pays them much more respect than they are entitled to.

"I have the pleasure to inform you, that we have heard from our chancellor, who approves highly of our declaring our sentiments with respect to the slave-trade, in a petition to the House of Commons. No time was lost. I had prepared the petition; which was instantly signed, and sent off by last post.

"Mr Boissier* has published his "Translation of M. Bonnet's Inquiries concerning Christianity," and has done me the honour to send me a copy; which I shall read as soon as I can command a day's leisure. In his preface he mentions Bishop Porteus as the first, "who traced out to him the road which leads to truth." From what I have seen of this book, I should be apprehensive that the author's manner is rather abrupt, and too abstruse to be popular, at least in this country. However, the world is under obligations to him, and to his worthy translator, for declaring themselves in so explicit a manner the friends of religion; and as M. Bonnet's character is very high in France, I hope his book will do a great deal of good.

"At my spare hours, which have been very few this winter, I am preparing to do, what, if circumstances had permitted, I ought to have done long ago, to print an abridgment, a very brief one, of my lectures on moral philosophy and logic. It is intended for no other purpose but to assist the memory of those students who attend my class; and therefore, though I shall print, I am in doubt whether I should publish it. The students, by paying for their

* Mentioned in Letter CXCVIII.

copies, will in time indemnify me for print and paper, which is all I shall ask in the pecuniary way. Notwithstanding all my care to be concise, I find it will extend to two octavos; the first of which will contain, "Elements of Moral Science," and the second, "Elements of Logic." Under Logic I comprehend, not only the philosophy of evidence, but likewise every thing that relates to language, composition, and criticism. Hitherto it has been my way, as it was that of my predecessor, to make the students take down in writing an abstract of the lectures and conversations; and this method is not without its advantages; but such abstracts, being written in great haste, were not always correct, and took up a good deal of time. The time, which I shall save by using a printed text book, I intend to employ in commenting upon classic authors, and other profitable exercises*.

"You will be glad to hear, that Sunday-schools are likely to do good here. Eight have been set a-going, and are supported by subscription.

"My son desires his best respects. My cough has obliged me to employ him more frequently, in the morning meeting at eight, than I wished to do: but he likes the business, and has now had experience of almost all the varieties of it. He has also been composing some lectures, one of which, accompanied with a model in pasteboard, is an account of Raymond Lully's mill for making books, alluded to by Dr Campbell in the "Philosophy of Rhetoric." He got Raymond's book in the college library, and made the mill exactly according to the author's directions."

LETTER CCII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Peterhead, 3d May, 1788.

"THE book I have in view will not be a mere syllabus, like the pamphlet which Dr Blair published; nor a collection of aphorisms, like Dr Ferguson's "Institutes:" in its plan it will more

* This abridgment of his lectures, Dr Beattie did publish, under the title of "Elements of Moral Science;" the first volume in the year 1790, the second volume in the year 1793.

resemble Dr James Gregory's "*Conspectus Medicinæ Theoreticæ*;" only it will be in English. If I live to execute my purpose, it will comprehend the substance of all my lectures and *conversations*, (for I often teach in the Socratic method, by question and answer,) with the omission of such illustrations, facts, and reasonings only, as cannot be expressed in few words. The first volume will contain, the Philosophy of the Human Mind; Principles of Natural Religion; Moral Philosophy; and Politics: and the second, Logic, or the Philosophy of Evidence; and Rhetoric, or the Belles Lettres. About one hundred and forty large quarto pages of the first volume are written; and I hope, if my health does not prevent me, to have it in the press before the end of the year.

"The same post, that brought your last most agreeable favour, brought also a letter, with two pamphlets, from the Bishop of London. The Bishop is very urgent with me, as you are, to publish my papers on the slave-trade. He says they will come in good season if they appear before the next session of parliament, for that nothing in that business will be done this session. The Privy-Council, he says, have been at uncommon pains to ascertain the exact nature of the African slave-trade, and the state of the slaves in our West India islands. His Lordship also wishes me to subjoin, as an appendix to my papers, an examination of an extraordinary pamphlet, which has just appeared, to prove the lawfulness, or, as the author calls it, the *licitness* of the slave-trade, from the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. This pamphlet he has sent me, but I have not yet got time to read it. It is the work of a Spanish Jesuit of the name of Harris, who it seems is connected with the slave-merchants of Liverpool, by whose means he hopes to obtain preferment in the church of England, to which he is willing to conform: his pamphlet is dedicated to the Mayor, Aldermen, &c. of Liverpool. The slave-dealers exult in this champion, and say that his work is unanswerable; but the Bishop of London says it is mere Jesuitical sophistry. From what I have seen of it, I should think it an easy matter to answer it; but whether I shall be able to do this, I know not. My health is a great hindrance to all my projects.

"The other pamphlet which the Bishop sent me, is a "Pastoral Letter to the English Clergy in the West Indies," who are all, it seems, subject to his ecclesiastical jurisdiction. It is short, but

very elegant, and very like himself and his station. It relates chiefly to two things, the conversion and education of the negroes, which he earnestly and powerfully recommends; and the qualifications which he insists on finding in all those West Indians who may apply to him for holy orders. My little book of "Evidences" is one of those which his Lordship is pleased to recommend to their attention."

LETTER CCIII.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Peterhead, 28th June, 1788.

"MY papers on the slave-trade would now appear too late. The legislature seems to have engaged in an investigation of that business with a generous alacrity, which does them infinite honour, and will undoubtedly bring on such regulations, as would make my zeal and my arguments both unnecessary and unseasonable. In fact, several of those abuses, which I had attacked with most severity, are already in part redressed, or in a fair way of being so; particularly the horrid cruelties perpetrated upon the poor negroes in their passage across the Atlantic, and the cruel laws to which they are subjected in some of the West Indian islands, particularly Barbadoes and Jamaica. If one may believe the newspapers, considerable reformations have already taken place in both those islands, as well as in North America. As to the final abolition of the traffic, I pray for it as earnestly as any body; but I do not think it can be accomplished soon, though in a few years it may, and I trust it will. Much good might be done in the meantime, if planters could be prevailed on to repose less confidence in overseers; to give liberty and wages to their most deserving slaves; to give Christian education to them all, with rest on Sunday; to teach them to be rational, by treating them as rational beings; and to mitigate the cruelty of punishment, and the severity of labour. I am truly sorry to hear of Mr Wilberforce's indisposition. It is very good in Mr and Mrs Montagu to interest themselves so much in his behalf: I hope their kind assiduities will be successful.

"I hope my venerable friend, Mrs Delany, is alive and well. I am extremely anxious to hear of her; having seen the other day in a newspaper, the words, "the *late* Mrs Delany;" which I would fain believe to be a newspaper blunder, as I have never heard of her death, or even that she was ill. I saw her frequently at Windsor last year, and was happy to observe no symptoms of decline. A very great person was pleased to joke with her on my account. "Where have you been these two days, Mrs D.?" said he, "but "I can guess; I warrant you have had more than one assignation "with Dr B. since he has been at Windsor." "Indeed, Sir," replied she, "Y. M. is right; Dr B. has been with me several times."

LETTER CCIV.

DR BEATTIE TO DR PORTEUS, BISHOP OF LONDON.

Peterhead, 3d July, 1788.

"AS soon as it is in my power I shall give the Rev. Mr Harris* a fair hearing, and let your Lordship know my opinion. I have seen a little of him, and think him a tolerable sophister. His arguments might pass, for argument's sake, in a school-disputation upon a thesis; but can have no influence upon a candid and rational mind, except perhaps to provoke indignation: for the matter is too solemn for laughter. He pretends to piety, reverence of the Scripture, and zeal for the rights of humanity; and all the while he is labouring to pervert Scripture, in order to vindicate one of the most impious and inhuman practices that ever disgraced the sublunary creation. He, good man! would not for the world offer an apology for any injustice, oppression, or cruelty, that may have been practised by dealers in slaves; he would only justify what he calls "the African slave-trade in the abstract." I know not whether I understand this. But, if he will remove all oppression, cruelty, and injustice, from that trade, I promise him I shall

* Who wrote a book to prove the slave-trade agreeable to reason and Scripture. See Letter CCII. to Sir William Forbes, p. 431.

not object to his abstract notions: the trade will then be a mere *idea*; as harmless as those *now* are, to which we give the names of ostracism, crusade, &c.; and will no more make negroes miserable, and slave-mongers cruel, than the second book of the "Æneid" will burn their towns. The misfortune is, that from this vile traffic, oppression, injustice, and cruelty, are inseparable. These crimes have, from the beginning of it, formed its basis, and without them it can no more subsist, than a house without a foundation. "If "you have any music that makes no noise," says a clown in Shakespeare to a company of fiddlers, "pray let us have it; but we "cannot endure any other." So say I to Mr Harris. If you can give us an African slave-trade, that has nothing cruel, oppressive, or unjust in it, with all my heart; let it be set a-going as soon as possible. To such a trade the British legislature will have no objection; and I trust they will never tolerate any other. They have entered into this business with a generous alacrity, that does them infinite honour; and will soon, I hope, make such regulations as will render my zeal and my arguments unnecessary, and even unseasonable."

LETTER CCV.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Peterhead, 10th July, 1788.

"I AM much obliged to you for the quotation from Mrs Piozzi's letters, and to that lady for speaking of me with so much kindness.* I was introduced to her and Mr Thrale by Dr Johnson, and received many and great civilities from both. Mr Thrale was a most respectable character; intelligent, modest, communicative,

* The paragraph in question is as follows: "Dr Beattie is as charming as "ever. ***** Every body rejoices that the Doctor will get his pension. "Every one loves him but Goldsmith, who says he cannot bear the sight of "so much applause as we all bestow upon him. Did he not tell us so him-"self, who would believe he was so exceedingly ill-natured?"†

† "Mrs Piozzi and Dr Johnson's Letters," Vol. I. p. 136.

and friendly: and I greatly admired his wife for her vivacity, learning, affability, and beauty: I thought her indeed one of the most agreeable women I ever saw; and could not have imagined her capable of acting so unwise a part as she afterwards did.

"What she says of Goldsmith is perfectly true. He was a poor fretful creature, eaten up with affectation and envy. He was the only person I ever knew who acknowledged himself to be envious. In Johnson's presence he was quiet enough; but in his absence expressed great uneasiness in hearing him praised. He envied even the dead; he could not bear that Shakespeare should be so much admired as he is. There might, however, be something like magnanimity in envying Shakespeare and Dr Johnson; as in Julius Cæsar's weeping to think, that at an age at which he had done so little, Alexander should have done so much. But surely Goldsmith had no occasion to envy me; which, however, he certainly did, for he owned it (though when we met he was always very civil;) and I received undoubted information, that he seldom missed an opportunity of speaking ill of me behind my back. Goldsmith's common conversation was a strange mixture of absurdity and silliness; of silliness so great, as to make me sometimes think that he affected it. Yet he was a genius of no mean rank: somebody, who knew him well, called him *an inspired idiot*. His ballad of "Edwin and Angelina" is exceedingly beautiful, and well conducted; and in his two other poems, though there be great inequalities, there is pathos, energy, and even sublimity.

LETTER CCVI.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUTCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 8th August, 1788.

"IT delights me to hear that Lord Huntly is to go to Oxford or Cambridge. An English university is the best place on earth for study; and, what is of still greater consequence, especially to a person of high rank, it supplies the best opportunities of contracting

those early connections of friendship, which one remembers with exquisite pleasure to the end of life; and which often contribute, more than any thing else, to a great man's influence and popularity. Mr Pitt, great as he is by hereditary right, and greater still by his own genius and virtue, would, I am persuaded, readily acknowledge how much he owes to Cambridge. There he was from the first a general favourite; and there he found many valuable friends, who, I am told, still adhere to him with a fervency of zeal, in which it is difficult to say, whether admiration or fondness be the most powerful ingredient. Such attachments do honour to human nature, and are equally delightful and lasting. The Duke will be at no loss to determine, whether Oxford or Cambridge is to be honoured with Lord Huntley's residence. It is natural for me to have a partiality to the former: but in most things they are, I believe, pretty equal. Oxford is a place of greater resort and more brilliancy; but the quiet of Cambridge is perhaps more salutary to the student. Each has produced such a number of great men, as no other seminary in the ancient or modern world can boast of. The Duke of Gloucester's son, if I mistake not, is gone to Cambridge.

"My son is greatly honoured by the notice you take of him, and desires to offer his humble service. His health is quite re-established, but he is too studious to be robust. He has gone pretty deep in the theory of music, and now begins to practise a little. The organ is his favourite instrument; and, as he has something of a mechanical turn, and needs to be decoyed from his books sometimes, I have made him employ his leisure at Peterhead, in superintending the building of an organ, under the auspices of Dr Laing. It is now almost finished, and can already, as Hamlet says, "discourse most eloquent music." The workmanship is good, and the tones are very pleasing."

LETTER CCVII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 31st October, 1788.

"THE account you have from Miss Bowdler, of Dr Taylor's "Sermons," agrees exactly with the sentiments of ——. Perhaps

you may wish to see his words. Here they are: "Before I re-
"lease you, I must mention one more publication, on account of
"its singularity as well as its merit. It is a volume of sermons,
"published by Dr Taylor, prebendary of Westminster,* who is
"lately dead. He was an old friend and school-fellow of Dr John-
"son's, and is often mentioned in the Doctor's letters to Mrs Thrale.
"He was long suspected of preaching sermons written by Dr
"Johnson. To confute this calumny, he ordered this volume of
"sermons to be published after his death. But I am afraid it will
"not quite answer his purpose; for I will venture to say, that
"there is not a man in England, who knows any thing of Dr John-
"son's peculiarities of style, sentiment, and composition, that will
"not instantly pronounce these sermons to be his. Indeed they
"are (some of them at least) in his very best manner; and Taylor
"was no more capable of writing them, than of making an epic
"poem." I long to see this literary curiosity."

LETTER CCVIII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUTCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 20th November, 1788.

"I HAD the honour to receive your Grace's most obliging letter yesterday morning; and immediately packed up my papers on the slave-trade, and delivered them to be forwarded to Gordon Castle. They are extremely incorrect, and not fit to be seen by any eyes that are not very partial to the writer; and, therefore, I must beg that your Grace will not show them to any body. Many things in them were true when I wrote them, which are not true now; a late act of parliament, and some late regulations in Jamaica and Barbadoes, having greatly mitigated the sufferings of the negroes, both in the West Indies, and in their transportation thither from their own country. And candour obliges me to declare further,

* The title of the book is, "Sermons on different Subjects, left for publi-
"cation by John Taylor, LL. D. &c. &c. Published by the Reverend Samuel
"Hayes, A. M." &c. A second volume was published the year following by the same title.

that though, when I wrote those papers, I thought I had good reason to believe every word in them, I have since found, that I was misinformed in regard to several particulars. All this your Grace will excuse with your wonted generosity, as well as the blotted condition of the manuscript, which I am afraid will make many passages quite unintelligible.

"The late dreadful news from Windsor must have been most distressing to your Grace*. Blessed be God, the danger seems now to be over; otherwise I should not be able to write on that, or any other subject. For these ten days past I have thought myself in a dark, confused, feverish, dream, with nothing before me but danger and horror. The agitation and anxiety I have undergone, are indeed such as it is impossible to describe, and such as I shall not soon get the better of. But may God restore the health of the best of sovereigns, and the best of men! and it matters not what become of me. Your Grace must have the most authentic intelligence, otherwise I would tell you of a letter which I had to-day from Sir William Forbes, which mentions one received from the highest authority, certifying, that his Majesty is in a fair way of recovery; and that the slowness of the recovery is, in the opinion of the physicians, very much in his favour. Sir William Fordyce too, in a letter which arrived here yesterday, gives the same account, and says, that the delirium is gone. I hope the King will soon have the exquisite satisfaction to know, from what his subjects have suffered on this occasion, that he is, as he deserves to be, the most beloved prince that ever sat on the British throne.

"You desire to know my opinion of Mr Gibbon. I can say very little about him; for such is the affectation of his style, that I could never get through the half of one of his volumes. If any body would translate him into good classical English, (such, I mean, as Addison, Swift, Lord Lyttelton, &c. wrote) I should read him with eagerness; for I know there must be much curious matter in his work. His cavils against religion, have, I think, been all confuted; he does not seem to understand that part of his subject: indeed I have never yet met with a man, or with an author, who both understood Christianity, and disbelieved it. It is, I am told, the fashion to admire Gibbon's style; my opinion of it, however, is supported

* The King's illness.

by great authorities, of whom I need only mention Lord Mansfield, the present Bishop of London, Mrs Montagu, and Major Mercer. In the Bishop's last letter to me there is the following passage: "We have been much amused this summer with Keate's 'Account "of the Pelew Islands:' and it is almost the only summer book we "have had. For Gibbon's three bulky quartos are fit only for the "gloom and horror of wintry storms. His style is more obscure "and affected than ever; and his insults on Christianity not less "offensive."

"I am glad to hear that your Grace is planning future groves to wave along the breezy hill. Of all rural occupations, if they were all in my power, I should prefer that of rearing trees and shrubs: and accordingly have always admired Addison's right antediluvian novel, on the subject of planting, as one of the most pleasing little tales I ever saw. It is in the "Spectator," Nos. 583, 584, 585. Your account of your walks through the decaying woods, puts me in mind of a fine passage in Thomson's "Autumn:"

> "The pale descending year, yet pleasing still,
> "A gentler mood inspires; for now the leaf
> "Incessant rustles from the mournful grove,
> "Oft startling such as studious walk below," &c.

I am tempted to make the quotation longer, but it is now time to release you."

LETTER CCIX.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 25th March, 1789.

"I THANK you most sincerely for your very instructive and pleasing letter; and with my whole soul I congratulate you on one of the happiest events that ever took place in this country, or in any other. I need not tell you that I mean, his Majesty's recovery. It is indeed a most signal interposition of Providence in our behalf; and has raised us all from the deepest affliction to an ecstacy of joy. The rejoicings on occasion of this great event have

been universal, and have far exceeded any thing I ever saw before in this country. May the Hearer of prayer, and the God of consolation, confirm the King's recovery, and grant him to see many happy years in the land of the living, with his family and people flourishing around him! and may all his people be enabled to make a right improvement of these dispensations of Providence! I hope his Majesty has not engaged in business too soon; and that he will, for this great while, engage in those parts of it only, which may amuse without fatiguing him.

"My friend Dr Campbell's great work (a new Translation of the Gospels, with preliminary Dissertations, and Notes critical and explanatory, in two volumes 4to) is published at last. I carefully read the whole in manuscript, and wrote many a sheet of remarks and criticisms upon it; and have no scruple to say, that it is one of the most important publications in theology, if not *the most important*, that has appeared in my time. It will give the public, at least the rational part of the public, a very high idea of the learning, acuteness, industry, candour, and piety, of the author; who is my next neighbour; and with whom I have lived in the same society, upon the most intimate terms, for almost thirty years. It is about forty years since he engaged in this important work; and yet I am afraid he will not get so much by it as Mr Sheridan did by the comedy of the "Duenna."

LETTER CCX.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Peterhead, 25th May, 1789.

"I CONGRATULATE you, Madam, on the late proceedings of the Commons in behalf of humanity and justice. The account of Mr Wilberforce's speech that appeared in the papers, is no doubt very imperfect; but it does him infinite honour, and I have read it once and again with great delight. It confirms a number of facts, which I find in my papers on negro-slavery, but of which I had of late become somewhat distrustful, having forgotten the authorities on which I had recorded them. The truth is, I have

been collecting materials on that subject for upwards of twenty-five years; and, as far as my poor voice could be heard, have laboured, not altogether unsuccessfully, in pleading the cause of the poor Africans. This, at least, I can say with truth, that many of my pupils have gone to the West Indies; and, I trust, have carried my principles along with them, and exemplified those principles in their conduct to their unfortunate brethren. A good deal of my information, with respect to the negroes, I received from a most worthy old gentleman, a particular friend of mine, who had been long in one of our West India islands; and having acquired a competent fortune, returned to his own country, and devoted the last thirty years of a long life to philosophy and literature. He was one of the most learned men I have ever met with, a sincere Christian, and one who held all injustice, oppression, and every sort of inhumanity, in utter detestation.*

"Mrs Arbuthnot is surprisingly well. She was at church yesterday. I need not tell you with what raptures of esteem and gratitude she speaks of you. I observe your benevolent intention of making an addition to your bounty to her; but will take it upon me to say, that it is quite unnecessary, as I know she considers herself as raised by your goodness to a state, not only of competence, but of opulence. She speaks of writing to her patroness very soon."

LETTER CCXI.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Peterhead, 28th July, 1789.

"I HAVE been lately looking into Mrs Cockburn's works†, which I borrowed from her niece, Mrs Arbuthnot, and which, though I had seen them before, I had not examined with any degree

* This gentleman's name was Wilson, the father of Mr George Wilson of Lincoln's-inn, now one of his Majesty's counsel, learned in the law, and well known to all the bench and profession, as one of the soundest and most learned lawyers, as well as one of the most honourable and well-informed men, at the English bar.

† See p. 384.

of minuteness. They have given me a very high opinion of the acuteness of the author's understanding, and of the goodness of her principles. She is also a clear and elegant writer, without any affectation. The abstruser parts of moral philosophy she seems to have studied with great accuracy and success, and is a very able advocate for Clarke and Locke. She speaks with extraordinary veneration of Warburton, who it seems corresponded with her sometimes; and she is a great admirer of Pope; but, what is rather particular, values him chiefly on account of his *moral* character, and, in the list of his virtues, mentions his friendship for Patty Blount. Our friend, Mrs A. appears to have been under great obligations to her aunt, and to have derived from her chiefly that taste for reading and study, which has been of so great use to her in the course of her long and solitary life. I do not find that Mrs Cockburn was distinguished for her taste: her attempts in poetry show rather a deficiency in that respect. Her tragedy, called, "The "Fatal Friendship," ought to have been suppressed; for it does her no credit, and shows her to have been at eighteen a greater adept in love matters than unmarried women of that age are commonly supposed to be: There are passages in that play, which I could not have the face to read, or hear read, in a lady's company. But her youth, and the licentiousness of the English stage in the end of the last century, may be pleaded, and ought to be admitted, as an apology, in behalf of one, who was undoubtedly an ornament to her sex, and an honour to her country. There are in her works, especially in her letters, many things that would entertain you. She lived many years (between 1726 and 1737) in Aberdeen; and yet I never heard any person there speak of her, though I have often heard her husband spoken of by those who must have known both."

LETTER CCXII.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Peterhead, 31st July, 1789.

"I AM very happy to hear, that the Lord-Primate of Ireland* has not forgotten me, and beg leave to offer my humble respects to his Grace. The endowing of an university at Armagh, with a library and astronomical apparatus, is a work worthy of his benevolent, liberal, and magnificent mind. Though the college of Dublin be, as I have been told it is, abundantly flourishing, it is certainly not extensive enough for so populous a country as Ireland; one proof of which is the great number of Irish students that every year resort to Glasgow; a circumstance which gives no little uneasiness to the people of Dublin, if I may judge from some of their pamphlets; in which not Glasgow only, but the other Scottish universities, are attacked with rancorous asperity, and such a total disregard to truth, as is hardly credible. I once had thoughts of answering one of the most malicious of those pamphlets, but changed my mind on considering, that the abuse was anonymous, and, in respect of style and composition, so void of merit, that there was no chance of its gaining any attention. I sincerely wish success to the Archbishop's noble foundation at Armagh. Every friend to humanity must regret, that his health is so precarious. I made Mr Creech very happy, by transmitting to him your, and his Grace's, approbation of the "Comparative View of Edinburgh."

"One knows not what to say of this wonderful revolution, that is likely to take place in France. As I wish all mankind to be free and happy, I should rejoice in the downfal of French despotism, if I thought it would give happiness to the people: but the French

* The most reverend Dr Richard Robinson, Lord-Archbishop of Armagh. A most exemplary prelate, of great worth, as this singular act of munificence strongly evinces. His Grace was, I believe, cousin to Mrs Montagu; and an intimate friendship subsisted between them. Out of compliment to her, the remainder of his peerage of Rokeby was taken to her nephew, who now enjoys it.

seem to me to be better fitted for that sort of government which they want to throw off, than for any other that they could adopt in its stead. Till of late, the glory of the monarch was the supreme wish of a Frenchman's heart; and that principle, though in the day of trouble and tumult it may admit of a temporary suspension, will not soon or easily give way to the cooler and more philosophic notions that have long been familiar to the British politician. It is true, the political ideas of the French have been in a state of improvement ever since the time of Montesquieu, who first gave his countrymen a sketch of the constitution of England: but political liberty is a thing, which, even among us who have long enjoyed it, is not universally understood; and which Harrington, Sydney, and Locke, understood very imperfectly. I dare say, that the bulk of the French nation at this moment suppose, as the North Americans seem to do, that liberty consists in the privilege of doing what they please, or, at least, of being subject to no laws but those of their own making; and yet it is certainly neither the one nor the other. The first would be anarchy, the worst sort of slavery; and the other is not compatible with any plan of policy that was ever yet devised by man. Political liberty I take to be, that state of society, in which men are so governed by equitable laws, and so tried by equitable judges, that no man can be hindered from doing what the law allows him to do, nor have reason to be afraid of any man so long as he does his duty. But I apprehend it will be long before a nation, emerging from despotism, and assuming a popular form of policy, can hit upon the proper way of establishing such a state of things; and, till that be done, convulsions are to be expected, which will sometimes endanger liberty, and sometimes tend to the subversion of legal authority. If the revolution in France be made effectual, it will probably be beneficial to the poor negroes: for I am told, that M. Neckar, and the National Assembly, have explicitly declared themselves for the abolition of the slave-trade.

"I am very sorry to hear of the death of my friend, Mr Ramsay, who was one of the first who drew the public attention to that subject. He was long in the West Indies; and at his return to Britain was presented to the living of Teston in Kent, and published his book on Slavery, which so exasperated the people concerned in that business, that they attacked not only his book, but also his moral character, with every species of abuse. Ramsay, however,

stood his ground, and answered to all the charges they brought against him. When I told him, about two years ago, that I thought he gave himself too much unnecessary trouble in answering every adversary, whether anonymous or otherwise, he said there was something in his temper, which would not allow him to rest till he had done so. I am persuaded, that anxiety of his has been in a great measure the occasion of his death; and I find the Bishop of London, who knew him well, is of the same opinion. The Bishop says he has died a martyr to a noble cause. Mr Ramsay was born at Frasersburgh, about eighteen miles from this place, and was educated at King's College, Aberdeen, where I got acquainted with him. He was several years older than I; but our standing as collegians was the same, though we were of different colleges."

The following letter, no doubt, refers to some present of money made by Mrs Montagu to Dr Beattie's youngest son, who had been named after her; but I do not find any letter, either of her's or of Dr Beattie's, in which the amount is specified. What he says of the blame she used to throw on Rousseau and others, for refusing such presents, as setting too high a value on money, is not, to me at least, very intelligible.

LETTER CCXIII.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Peterhead, 14th September, 1789.

"THOUGH I have had innumerable opportunities of admiring the generosity of your sentiments, and your superiority to the formalities of fashion and verbal compliment, I am at a loss what answer I shall return to your letter. I know with what pleasure you confer favours, and that you prize the gifts of fortune only as they supply you with the means of doing good; I have heard you blame Rousseau and others for setting so high a value on money, as to refuse any assistance of that kind from those whose patronage

they would have been proud to boast of in any other way: and yet so largely have I already participated in your bounty, that I am almost tempted to remonstrate a little on the present occasion. However, let it be as you are pleased to order. In return for so much goodness, it would ill become me to teaze you with protestations and apologies. With the most sincere gratitude, therefore, and with fervent prayers for your health and happiness, I accept of your most generous offer in behalf of my little boy, whom you honour with the appellation of godson. He shall thank you soon with his own hand. I know he will be much affected with this new instance of your favour. For though he is sometimes less attentive than I could wish, in matters of literature, he is of an affectionate and grateful disposition, and his veneration for you, Madam, is unbounded. As yet he knows not what your letter contains. I intend to keep back from him that intelligence for a few days, till circumstances afford me an opportunity of enforcing, by means of it, some useful moral lesson; and a lesson so enforced, will, I trust, have a powerful and lasting effect. When I return to Aberdeen, which will be in ten or twelve days, I shall, by subjoining a clause to my will, secure your bounty to him; which will be a very material addition to his *peculium*.

"If the newspapers may be credited, French affairs become every day "confusion worse confounded." Whatever may be in the minds of the more intelligent part of the nation, it is plain that the generality are actuated by a levelling principle of the worst kind; which one is sorry to see likely to extend its influence beyond the limits of France. I do not think that any thing like the enormities now prevailing there, took place during our civil wars of the last century. We lost much blood, it is true, but it was generally in the field of battle, or with some appearance at least of law; and we had but two parties, and those headed by men of abilities and authority. But in France there seems to be no subordination, authority, or law, nor any great abilities exerted any where; instead of two, there are innumerable parties; and the blood that is spilt is all in the way of murder and massacre."

LETTER CCXIV.

DR BEATTIE TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 12th December, 1789.

"I THANK you for your valuable hints with respect to Addison. They shall be duly attended to. I have begun my notes on Tickell's life of him, and written several pages. But I fear it will not be possible for me to make them interesting; so that if Mr Sibbald* expect much from them, he will certainly be disappointed. I suppose there will not be room in the volume for more than thirty or forty pages of this prefatory matter†; and those I hope to finish in a few weeks.

"I remember that Dr Hurd speaks somewhere of somebody who had projected an epic poem of the ancient and legitimate form; but I know not whom he meant. I have heard Dr Brown guessed to be the person; but he was by no means equal to the task; nor has either this age or the last produced a genius equal to it, except perhaps Mr Gray. Pope himself would have failed if he had persisted in his epic project. He would undoubtedly have made something superior to "Leonidas," the "Epigoniad," the "Henriade," &c. but with Homer, Virgil, and Milton, he could no more cope, than "I with Hercules."

"I wish I could see Philips's play of the "Distrest Mother;" for I never have seen it, nor do I know where to inquire about it. I wish you would take the trouble to compare it with Racine's "Andromaque," and inform me how far it is a translation or an imitation of that tragedy. From such a writer as Ambrose Philips I never could have expected a good play, or a good poem of any sort; which made me always think, that there must be great extravagance of praise in what Addison says of it. But it has the merit of furnishing matter for one of the most humorous of Addison's papers. That strange mixture of sentiments that arise in Sir Roger's mind, from his every now and then mistaking the play for

* The publisher. † They amount to xlvi.

a reality, and by and bye recollecting that it is but a play, is perfectly natural, and Addison has managed it to the best account. Fielding's imitation of it, in that part of "Tom Jones" where Patridge goes to see "Hamlet," is hardly inferior."

LETTER CCXV.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 9th April, 1790.

"I WAS so much delighted with your most affectionate letter, that I wished to answer it in course; but was prevented, by having more to do in the college than usual, it being the last week of our session. The vacation is now begun; and nothing, but what I am going to mention, would prevent my setting out immediately for your house in George-street, where I wish on many accounts to be, and where, in a few weeks, I hope I shall be. My son's bad health is the circumstance which prevents me. In the end of last November, by giving assistance to a sick friend in the night time, he got a very severe cold, which came on with a violent fit of fever, and he has been in a declining way almost ever since. Within these three weeks he has got a little better, which, I flatter myself is at this season of the year a good symptom. He has no cough, and very little positive pain, and he has good spirits; his chief complaints are weakness and a disordered stomach. Dr ***** thinks, and he thinks himself, that some weeks of Peterhead water, followed by a course of goats' milk, will set him up again. To Peterhead, therefore, we shall go in a few days.

"There is not much in my notes on Addison's papers. They do not interfere with what I projected some time ago, about an "Essay on the Writings and Genius of Addison;" which, if I live to finish it, will be a volume by itself. But, as you observe, the second volume of my "Elements," &c. must be my first concern. A great part of the materials of it are provided; and two or three months of leisure, and tolerable health, would almost enable me to finish it.

"The same favourable accounts, which you are so good to give me, of the Bishop of London and Mrs Porteus, I have received from several quarters, and very lately in a letter from himself, in which there is a particular and pleasing description of his new Kentish retreat near Sevenoaks. I once thought of seeing him, and some other friends in the south, in the course of the ensuing summer. The Bishop's constitution is certainly not a robust one; it seems rather the contrary; and yet nobody enjoys better health and spirits than he; such are the effects of temperance, activity, and a cheerful temper. I earnestly pray his life may be long; for he is a blessing to his friends, and a zealous and judicious guardian of the church. You would observe, and I am sure with pleasure, how averse the parliament is to civil or ecclesiastical innovation. This to all, "who fear God and honour the King, who study to be "quiet and mind their own business, and meddle not with them "who are given to change," must be very welcome intelligence. I hope our people will take warning from France; which I believe is at present a miserable country, and likely to continue so. The French wish for liberty, but know not what it is; they seem to think it the same thing with levelling. Their King is the slave of their Assembly, and their Assembly are the slaves of the rabble."

LETTER CCXVI.

DR BEATTIE TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Peterhead, 25th April, 1790.

"I THANK you for your very kind letter, and for the tender concern you take in my son's welfare. By the advice of physicians, and in consequence of his own earnest desire, I brought him hither about a week ago. He has gained nothing as yet; I am afraid he has rather been losing ground. Yet Dr ***** is under no apprehensions, and assures me there is nothing the matter with him but weakness; which, being the effect of relaxation merely, good weather, fresh air, strengthening medicines, and moderate exercise, will in time remove. I thought of a journey for him

several weeks ago; but find, after repeated trials, that he has not strength equal to it.

"Of the notes on Tickell's "Life of Addison," and Johnson's "Remarks on his Prose-writings," the printing is at last begun, but proceeds very slowly. I am much obliged to you for the extract from the "New Tatler," relating to Addison's thousand pounds. It is certainly a true state of that transaction, of which Dr Johnson gives an account so partial, and to Addison so injurious.

"The annotations on the late edition of the "Tatler," in six volumes, are in general not such as one would have expected. Many of them are very trifling; and many of them, by endeavouring to substitute real for fictitious names, and so to transform general into personal satire, are injurious to the writers of the "Tatler," and have a tendency to make that work both less useful and less amusing. And what are we to think of that assertion, so often repeated in those annotations, that it is impossible to distinguish the style of Addison from that of Steele? This alone would satisfy me, that the annotators were no competent judges, either of composition, or of the English language; which indeed appears from the general tenor of their own style, which is full of those new-fangled phrases and barbarous idioms that are now so much affected by those who form their style from political pamphlets, and those pretended speeches in parliament that appear in newspapers. Should this jargon continue to gain ground among us, English literature will go to ruin. During the last twenty years, especially since the breaking out of the American war, it has made an alarming progress. One does not wonder that such a fashion should be adopted by illiterate people, or by those who are not conversant in the best English authors; but it is a shame to see such a man as Lord Hailes give way to it, as he has done in some of his latest publications. If I live to execute what I propose, on the writings and genius of Addison, I shall at least enter my protest against this practice; and, by exhibiting a copious specimen of the new phraseology, endeavour to make my reader set his heart against it.

"I am very happy to hear, that your eldest son intends so soon to exchange Paris for Geneva; a land of impiety and distraction, for a settled government in a Christian country. Ever since the breaking out of this revolution, (I should rather say, since the

commencement of French anarchy) my opinion of that infatuated people has been invariably the same. I wish them liberty with all my heart; but the liberty they aim at, that is, the liberty of doing what they please, I do not wish them. No despotism is so dreadful as that of the rabble; the *Bastile* was never so bad a thing as the *lanterne* is; and I doubt not that the greatest and most respectable part of the French nation would be heartily glad to see their old government re-established, even in all its rigour. But, in fact, it was not rigorous; it was the mildest despotism upon earth; and far preferable, in my opinion, if we consider what was good in it, as well as what was bad, to any republican form of government now subsisting. I wish Mr Burke would publish what he intended on the present state of France. He is a man of principle, and a friend to religion, to law, and to monarchy, as well as to liberty."

LETTER CCXVII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 23d July, 1790.

"I HAVE read Bruce's "Travels," all but the second volume, which contains a very uninteresting business, the civil history of Abyssinia. I became fonder of Bruce as he and I grew better acquainted. He is not an elegant writer, but he is frequently a learned one; and, though too much given to ostentation, I think we must, for all that, acknowledge him to be a hero. There is much curious matter in him: I thought I saw some contradictions or inconsistencies; but that might be owing to the distracted state of my mind. If I can find leisure I will read him a second time, and then I am sure I shall like him still better. I honour him greatly for being a Christian, as well as a traveller and philosopher: there are in his book many striking confirmations of the truth of the Old Testament history, which he emphatically calls the most authentic of all ancient histories.

LETTER CCXVIII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 3d August, 1790.

"MY son continues, as he has been for this four weeks past, without either gaining ground, or apparently losing any. His debility is extreme; and his cough a little troublesome, but not very painful; and to me it does not seem to have that hollow sound which is generally heard in consumptive cases. He continues his milk diet; the greatest part of which is goats' milk.

"I am well aware of the propriety of your advice, and will endeavour to profit by it. To torment ourselves with unavailing anxieties about possible or even probable evils, is not only imprudent but unlawful; for our religion expressly forbids it. But I have not now the command of my thoughts. Ever since the commencement of our vacation, I have been passing, without intermission, from one scene of perplexity and sorrow to another. But let me not trouble you with things of this nature. It would become me better to speak of the manifold blessings which Providence has conferred upon me, than of any trials which may have fallen to my lot. These will all terminate well, if it is not my own fault; and even for these I ought to be thankful; for I can say, from the fullest conviction, that "it is good for me to have been afflicted."

"I am glad that you approve of my slight annotations upon Addison. I have not yet got a sight of the new edition of his proseworks; but I should like to see it, having almost forgotten what I wrote, of which I kept no copy. I am greatly obliged to Miss Bowdler for her favourable opinion; and am well pleased to find, that she approves of my sentiments with respect to the present rapid decline of the English language. I begin to fear it will be impossible to check it; but an *attempt* would be made, if I had leisure and a little more tranquillity of mind.

"I have been reading with all the attention that my bewildered mind is capable of, Bishop Newton's "Dissertations on the

Prophecies." The simplicity of the style and manner is very characteristical of its author, whom I well knew, and who was the most saint-like Nathaniel I ever saw. It is a very learned and pious work, and should be read by every body: for though all the reasonings are not equally satisfying, a thing not to be expected in such a work, it contains many acute and striking observations, which, though they should not overcome the obstinacy of the infidel, can hardly fail to confirm the faith of the Christian. It contains a very great variety of historical information, and throws a surprising light on many obscure passages of Scripture."

That misfortune which Dr Beattie had long dreaded, the loss of one so dear to him as his eldest son, was now fast advancing. In his letters to his friends for several months preceding, he had given a melancholy presage of what was about to happen; and the piety and resignation with which he viewed its approach, were truly edifying.

The following letter to the Dutchess of Gordon gives an account of that event having actually taken place. It is worthy of himself, and cannot be perused without a deep sense of what he must have suffered on the occasion.

LETTER CCXIX.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUTCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 1st December, 1790.

"KNOWING with what kindness and condescension your Grace takes an interest in every thing that concerns me and my little family, I take the liberty to inform you, that my son James is dead; that the last duties to him are now paid; and that I am endeavouring to return, with the little ability that is left me, and with entire submission to the will of Providence, to the ordinary business of life. I have lost one who was always a pleasing companion;

but who, for the last five or six years, was one of the most entertaining and instructive companions that ever man was blest with. For his mind comprehended almost every science; he was a most attentive observer of life and manners; a master of classical learning; and he possessed an exuberance of wit and humour, a force of understanding, and a correctness and delicacy of taste, beyond any other person of his age I have ever known.

"He was taken ill in the night of the 30th of November, 1789; and from that time his decline commenced. It was long what physicians call a *nervous atrophy;* but towards the end of June, symptoms began to appear of the lungs being affected. Goats' milk, and afterwards asses' milk, were procured for him in abundance; and such exercise as he could bear, he regularly took: these means lengthened his days, no doubt, and alleviated his sufferings, which in deed were not often severe; but, in spite of all that could be done, he grew weaker and weaker, and died the 19th of November, 1790, without complaint or pain, without even a groan or a sigh; retaining to the last moment the use of his rational faculties; indeed, from first to last, not one delirious word ever escaped him. He lived twenty-two years and thirteen days. Many weeks before it came, he saw death approaching; and he met it with such composure and pious resignation, as may no doubt be equalled, but cannot be surpassed.

"He has left many things in writing, serious and humorous, scientific and miscellaneous, prose and verse, Latin and English; but it will be a long time before I shall be able to harden my heart so far as to revise them.

"I have the satisfaction to know, that every thing has been done for him that could be done; and every thing according to the best medical advice that Scotland could afford. For the last five months I kept in my family a young medical friend, who was constantly at hand: and from the beginning to the end of my son's illness, I was always either by him, or within call. From these circumstances, your Grace will readily believe, that I derive no little satisfaction. But my chief comfort arises from reflecting upon the particulars of his life; which was one uninterrupted exercise of piety, benevolence, filial affection, and indeed of every virtue which it was in his power to practise. I shall not, with respect to him, adopt a mode of speech which has become too com-

mon, and call him *my poor son:* for I must believe, that he is infinitely happy, and will be so for ever.

"May God grant every blessing to your Grace, your family, and all your friends.

"The Duke of Gordon has done me the honour, according to his wonted and very great humanity, to write me a most friendly and sympathetic letter on this occasion."

SECTION IV.

FROM THE DEATH OF DR BEATTIE'S ELDEST SON IN 1790, TO HIS OWN DEATH IN 1803.

DR BEATTIE bore the loss of his son with singular fortitude and resignation. Yet although his grief was not clamorous, it was not the less severe; and that beautiful line of his own "Hermit" might most aptly be applied to him:

"He thought as a sage, though he felt as a man."

The event indeed had been long foreseen; he was therefore not altogether unprepared to meet the stroke: and the thousand nameless attentions which he had been in the daily habit of paying to this darling object of his affection, during the course of his illness, by continually occupying his time, had in some degree given employment to his thoughts, and had prevented him from feeling the full weight of his impending misfortune. But when at length the scene was closed, and he had piously paid the last mournful duties to his child's remains, he experienced, in its full extent, the melancholy void which was occasioned by the loss of one so dear to him, who, as he himself emphatically expresses it, had been "the pleasantest, and for the last four or five years of his short life, "one of the most instructive companions that ever man was de-"lighted with. But—THE LORD GAVE; THE LORD HATH TAKEN "AWAY: BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD.—I adore the Au-"thor of all good, who gave him grace to lead such a life, and die "such a death, as makes it impossible for a Christian to doubt of "his having entered upon the inheritance of a happy immortal-"ity."* His habitual piety and submission to the will of Heaven,

* "Account of the Life and Character of James Hay Beattie," p. 56, 12mo edition.

were indeed the great sources whence he derived that fortitude by which he was enabled to bear up under this weight of affliction. The very thought, too, of his son's extraordinary merit, while in one respect it aggravated the feeling of his loss, afforded him no slight consolation under it; and I believe he might have appropriated to himself, with perfect sincerity, the beautiful and affecting eulogy of the great Duke of Ormond, on occasion of the death of the virtuous and gallant Earl of Ossory, that "he "would not exchange his dead son for any living son in Christen- "dom."*

As soon as Dr Beattie was able to collect his scattered thoughts, he set himself to examine the papers which his son had left behind him; consisting chiefly of fragments of essays, and unfinished pieces of poetry, on the composition of which he had occasionally employed himself; together with many unconnected memorandums of what he meant to perform, had it pleased God to prolong his life. Those manuscripts, as they evinced the extent of his genius, and the singular proficiency to which he had attained during so short a period, in so many branches of literature and science, while they excited his father's admiration, added to the regret he could not but feel for the untimely fate of one who had given such rich promises, had he been spared, of being an ornament to his country, and a blessing to mankind. From among these papers, he selected such pieces as he thought deserving of preservation; and he soothed his grief, by writing an account of his son's life and character, which he resolved, though not to publish, yet to print for the use of his friends. He was pleased to inscribe it to Mr Baron Gordon, Major Mercer, Mr Arbuthnot, and myself, to all of whom he was much attached, as he had long received from us the strongest proofs of mutual friendship.

Of this selection, it must be fairly acknowledged, that all the pieces are by no means of equal merit. While some bear undisputed marks of genius and talents, far beyond the author's years, others do not rise even to mediocrity. He himself gave the reason of the miscellaneous nature of the collection, in his prefatory address; in which he says, that "He wished to give such proofs as "could be had, and might be published, of the various talents of "the author; and, for the sake of example, to show, that, though "studious and learned, he was neither austere nor formal; and

* Hume's "History of England," Vol. VIII. p. 164.

"that in him the strictest piety and modesty were united, with the "utmost cheerfulness, and even playfulness of disposition."* In vain was it that some of his friends, to whose perusal he had submitted the manuscript, took the liberty of representing to him, that of those humorous pieces, of which Dr Beattie was himself exceedingly fond, although they had no doubt been highly relished by the domestic circle, for whose amusement they had been originally composed, some were of such a nature, as that no very high degree of approbation could be looked for from others—that, therefore, he had better confine his selection to such, whether in verse or prose, as were of undisputed merit. Dr Beattie, however, continued firm in his own opinion; and the volume came from the press as it now appears†. To the edition of Dr Beattie's works, in prose and verse, now preparing for publication, I propose to subjoin only such a selection of those pieces of his son's, as, in my judgment, do him most credit; together with an abridgment of the "Account of his Life and Character." If in doing so, I shall thus take the liberty of differing from an authority so high, I can only plead in my own vindication, the opinion I have mentioned, as having originally been given, and the rectitude of my intention, in anxiously wishing to do what I think will be most conducive to the reputation of both father and [illegible].

I now proceed with the continuance of his correspondence with his friends.

LETTER CCXX.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. DR LAING.

Aberdeen, 14th December, 1790.

"I KNOW you are anxious to hear from me; and I wish, as I have much to say, to write you a long letter; but [illegible] it is not in

* Dedication of the "Account of the Life and Character of James Hay "Beattie," p. vii.

† I have said, that the volume was originally printed at Dr Beattie's expense, and only distributed among his friends. Those pieces of his son's, however, so printed, together with the account of his life and character, have since been published for sale in London, as a second volume of an edition of his own poetical works, published under his authority in the year 1799.

my power at present. There is only one subject on which I can think;* and my nerves are so shattered, and my mind feels (if I may so express myself) so sore, that I can hardly attend to any thing. You may be assured, that to the will of God I am perfectly resigned: and, in the late dispensation of his Providence, I see innumerable instances of the divine benignity, for which I can never be sufficiently thankful.

"Mr ****** would tell you many particulars, which I need not recapitulate. Since the last duty was paid, I have thrice a-day attended my business in the college; the doing of which is, in the present circumstances, painful and laborious, but perhaps salutary. I sleep irregularly; the pain in my side is frequently troublesome; and the dizziness of my head is so great, as would alarm and astonish me, if I had not been used to it: but, upon the whole, I am as well as I had any reason to expect. I have had very kind letters of condolence from all my friends.

"I know not whether you will, as a physician, approve of what I am doing at my hours of leisure—writing an account of the life, character, education, and literary proficiency, of our departed friend. I sometimes think it gives relief to my mind, and sooths it. At any rate, it is better than running into company, in order to drive him, as much as possible out of my remembrance. With all the tenderness that writing on such a subject necessarily occasions, it yields also many consolations so pleasing, that for the world I would not part with them. I know not what I shall do with this narrative when it is finished: I have thoughts of printing a few copies of it, and sending them to my particular friends.

"I have ordered a marble slab to be erected over his grave; with an inscription, of which I inclose a copy. In some things I think it falls below the truth; but rises in nothing above it, so far as I can judge. Monumental inscriptions I consider as belonging, not to poetry, but to history: the writers of them should give the truth, if possible the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. I wrote this inscription in Latin; thinking that language more suitable, than English, to his character as a scholar and philosopher. The papers he has left are many; but few of them finished. In little notes and memorandums, some Latin and some English, I

* The recent loss of his eldest son.

find strokes of character greatly to his honour, forms of devotion, pious resolutions, hints for writing essays, &c."

LETTER CCXXI.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. DR LAING.

Aberdeen, 31st January, 1791.

"MY heart is likely to receive very soon another deep wound. Our Principal's life is in the most extreme danger. The disorder began with what was supposed a cold only, but has become a most violent asthma with fever, and in the night-time such extreme distress, that Mrs Campbell told me to-day, in an agony of grief, that it would be better for him to be at rest. This morning he expressed great anxiety to see me. I went immediately, and was a quarter-of-an-hour alone with him. He told me he was dying; with other matters which I cannot mention; and gave me directions with respect to some things in which he is interested. I endeavoured to raise his spirits; and when I left him, he was better than when I went in. But Dr [redacted] little or no hopes of him: Mrs Campbell has none. I [redacted] his pulse not bad; but he told me he had always a very slow pulse. A person so amiable and so valuable, and who has been my intimate and affectionate friend for thirty years, it is not a slight matter to lose: but I fear I must lose him. His death will be an unspeakable loss to our society.

"The monument, with the inscription, is now erected in the church-yard; so that all that matter is over. I often dream of the grave that is under it: I saw with some satisfaction, on a late occasion, that it is very deep, and capable of holding [redacted] laid on that which is already in it. I hope my friends will [redacted] my body to sleep there."*

* See p. 15.

The inscription is as follows:

JACOBO. HAY. BEATTIE. JACOBI. F.
Philos. in. Acad. Marischal. Professori.
Adolescenti.
Ea. Modestia.
Ea. Suavitate. Morum.
Ea. Benevolentia. erga. omnes.
Ea. erga. Deum. Pietate.
Ut. Humanum. nihil. supra.
In. Bonis. Literis.
In. Theologia.
In. omni. Philosophia.
Exercitatissimo.
Poetæ. insuper.
Rebus. in. Levioribus. faceto.
In. Grandioribus. Sublimi.
Qui. Placidam. Animam. efflavit.
XIX. Novemb. MDCCXC.
Annos. habens. XXII. Diesque. XIII.
PATER. MOERENS. H. M. P.

LETTER CCXXII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 31st January, 1791.

"I HAVE too often sent you letters that must have given you pain. I am happy in having it in my power to send one that will give you pleasure." I beg you will let Mr Baron Gordon and Mr Arbuthnot know the contents of it.

"Principal Campbell's disorder has taken an unexpected and very favourable turn. I sat with him half-an-hour to-day, and found, to my inexpressible satisfaction, that his fever is gone, that he has little to complain of, and that he now begins to have hopes of recovery. I have seldom seen him more cheerful: and he

would willingly have talked much more than I would allow him to do. Few things have ever happened to me in life that gave me more satisfaction than the prospect of his recovery. It is a blessing to the public, of inestimable benefit to Marischal College, and to me a very singular mercy. In consequence of it, I feel my heart more disengaged and light, than it has been this many long months. May God confirm his recovery, and preserve him! The physicians both entertain sanguine hopes.

"You, my dear sir, and I, have seen several instances of the power of Christianity in triumphing over death. I saw many instances of it on a late occasion, that nearly affected me. I must give you a little anecdote, which Mrs Campbell told me to-day: At a time when Dr Campbell seemed to be just expiring, and had told his wife and niece that it was so, a cordial happened unexpectedly to give him relief. As soon as he was able to speak, he said, that he wondered to see their countenances so melancholy, and covered with tears, in the apprehension of his departure. At, that instant, said he, I felt my mind in such a state, in the thoughts of my immediate dissolution, that I can express my feelings in no other way, than by saying, that I was *in a rapture*. The feelings of such a mind as Dr Campbell's, in such an awful moment, when he certainly retained the full use of all his faculties, deserve to be attended to. When will an infidel die such a death!

"I have a thousand things to say; but after what I said last, every thing else is impertinent. Adieu. May God bless Lady Forbes and your family."

LETTER CCXXIII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUTCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 7th March, 1791.

"AFTER the patient hearing which your Grace has done me the honour to grant to several of my opinions, I presume you will not be at a loss to guess what I think of Mr Burke's book on the French revolution. I wished the French nation very well; I

wished their government reformed, and their religion; I wished both to be according to the British model; and I know not what better things I could have wished them. But (with the skill and temper of that surgeon, who, in order to alleviate the toothach, should knock all his patient's teeth down his throat) they, instead of reforming popery, seem to have resolved upon the abolition of Christianity; instead of amending their government, they have destroyed it; and, instead of advising their King to consult his own and his people's dignity, by making law the rule of his conduct, they have used him much more cruelly than our Charles I. was used; they have made him a prisoner and a slave.

"They will have a democracy indeed, and no aristocracy! They know not the meaning of the words. A democracy, in which *all* men are supposed to be perfectly equal, never yet took place in any nation; and never can, so long as the distinctions are acknowledged, of rich and poor, master and servant, parent and child, old and young, strong and weak, active and indolent, wise and unwise. They will have a republic; and of this word too they misunderstand the meaning; they confound republic with levelling: and a levelling spirit, generally diffused, would soon overturn the best republican fabric that ever was reared. They must also have a monarchy (or at least a monarch) without nobility; not knowing, that without nobility a free monarch can no more subsist, than the roof of a house can rise to and retain its proper elevation, while the walls are but half-built; not knowing, that where there are only two orders of people in a nation, and those the regal and the plebeian, there must be perpetual dissension between them, either till the king get the better of the people, which will make him (if he pleases) despotical, or till the people get the better of the king, which, where all subordination is abolished, must introduce anarchy. It must be the interest of the nobility to keep the people in good humour, these being always a most formidable body; and it is equally the interest of the nobles to support the throne; for if it fall they are crushed in its ruins. The same House of Commons that murdered Charles I. voted the House of Lords to be useless: and when the rabble of France had imprisoned and enslaved their King, they immediately set about annihilating their nobles. Such things have happened; and such things must always happen in like circumstances. These principles I have been pondering in my mind

these thirty years; and the more I learn of history, of law, and of human nature, the more I become satisfied of their truth. But there seems to be just now in France such a total ignorance of human nature and of good learning, as is perfectly astonishing; there is no consideration, no simplicity, no dignity; all is froth, phrensy, and foppery.

"In Mr Burke's book are many expressions, that might perhaps, with equal propriety, have been less warm: but against these it is not easy to guard, when a powerful eloquence is animated by an ardent mind. There are also, no doubt, some things that might have been omitted without loss: and the arrangement of the subject might perhaps have been made more convenient for ordinary readers. But the spirit and principles of the work, I, as a lover of my King, and of the constitution of my country, do highly approve; and within my very narrow circle of influence, I shall not fail to recommend it. It came very seasonably; at a time, when a considerable party among us are labouring to introduce into this island the anarchy of France; and when some seem to entertain the hope, that the carnage of civil war will soon deluge our streets in blood: but no matter, say they, provided Kings, and nobles, and bishops, are exterminated; and Mahometans, Pagans, and atheists, obtain universal toleration.

"I once intended to have attempted to write something on the subject of Mr Burke's book, and nearly according to his plan: and had my mind been a little more at ease during the last summer, I believe I should have done it. But when I heard that Mr Burke had the matter in hand, I knew any attempt of mine would be not only useless, but impertinent. He has done the subject infinitely more justice than it was in my power to do.

"At a time when your Grace has so many matters of importance to attend to, I would not have troubled you with so long a letter, if you had not desired me to give my opinion of Mr Burke's book. But this led me into some digressions; which, though your judgment may blame, I know your goodness will pardon."

LETTER CCXXIV.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Fulham Palace, 7th June, 1791.

"THE Bishop of London, who brought me out of town on Saturday last, urges me to go to Bath; in which he is joined by Miss Hannah More, who is here just now, though she commonly resides at Bath. She is to draw up a paper of directions for me. I know not whether you have seen her. She is one of the most agreeable women I know: to her genius and learning * you are no stranger.

"Fulham Palace is a noble and venerable pile, and so large that I have not yet learned to find my way in it. The grounds belonging to it, which are perfectly level, and comprehend twenty or thirty acres, are of a circular form nearly, and surrounded by a moat supplied with water from the Thames; and round the whole circumference, on the inside of the moat, there is a fine gravel walk shaded with four or five rows of the most majestic oaks, elms, &c. that are any where to be seen. Of the buildings, which form two square courts, (besides offices) some are ancient, and some comparatively modern. Many of the apartments are magnificent, particularly the dining room (which was the work of Bishop Sherlock) and the library. There is also a very elegant chapel, in which the whole family meet to prayers, at half past nine in the morning, and where the Bishop preached to us on Sunday evening, from the second article of the creed. I never heard, even from him, a finer sermon; and Montagu, who is a sort of critic in sermons, was in utter astonishment at the energy and elegance of his pronunciation.

"I read yesterday the debate on the slave trade, which fills a two-shilling pamphlet. The speeches of Mr Wilberforce, Mr Pitt, Mr W. Smith, and Mr Fox, are most excellent, and absolutely unanswerable. The friends to the abolition are very sanguine in their hopes, that this diabolical commerce will in two or three years be at an end."

See p. 145, 377.

LETTER CCXXV.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. DR LAING.

Fulham Palace, 6th June, 1792.

"I KNOW you will be very anxious to hear good accounts of my health, and I wish I could send you such; but that is very far from being the case. I left Aberdeen the 16th of April, and in a week, for I went very slowly, got to Edinburgh, where I remained three weeks, during all which time we had from the east very cold and stormy weather. The journey from Edinburgh to London was the work of nine days; for on account of my health I still went slowly, seldom above fifty miles a-day, though the roads were the finest that can be. On my arrival in London, the wind settled in the east, where it has been ever since; and the weather, from being cold and stormy, became and still continues to be, unsupportably hot. Violent heat and east wind will either of them, beat down my strength at any time: think then what I suffered, when both came upon me at once, enforced by the stifling atmosphere of London. I lost all my strength, and all the spirit that remained with me. The day after my arrival, I dined with Mrs Montagu, and her amiable nephew and niece, and introduced Montagu to his godmother, who gave him as affectionate a reception as if he had been her own son, and seemed to be (indeed she told me she was) much pleased with his appearance and behaviour. Every body he has seen is kind to him, and he very soon becomes acquainted wherever he is. We lodged ten days with our friends Mr and Mrs ******, who showed us the utmost attention and kindness, and with whom we should have still been, if the Bishop of London had not on Saturday last brought us to this place, which is his summer residence. It is indeed a noble and venerable mansion, five miles from town, on the brink of the Thames, and situated in a spacious lawn, surrounded with rows of the most majestic elms and oaks, &c. that are any where to be seen. I may have told you, that our

friend ******'s house is within a hundred yards of Westminster Abbey. Notwithstanding this, and that the commemoration music was going on at the time we were there, in the presence of the King and Royal Family, and some thousands of the first people of the kingdom, and conducted by the greatest band of musicians that ever were brought together in this world; and though the music was Handel's (for his Majesty hears no other on that occasion), yet my health was such, that I could not go to it. Perhaps this was no loss to me. Even the organ of Durham cathedral was too much for my feelings: for it brought too powerfully to my remembrance another organ, much smaller indeed, but more interesting, which I can never hear any more."*

LETTER CCXXVI.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Fulham Palace, 30th June, 1791.

"I AM favoured with yours of the 17th, and thank you for every part of it, especially for that in which you give me so particular an account of Lady Forbes, in whom I am indeed as much interested as I can be in any human being. I am greatly concerned to hear of her relapse; which, considering the very untowardly state of the weather, we need neither wonder nor be alarmed at; but now, when summer and the west wind are at last come, I am confident she will soon experience a very sensible change for the better, and gradually regain her wonted health; to which her placid and cheerful temper will greatly contribute.

"My health is better since I came hither. To the tranquillity, the fresh air, and the venerable bowers of Fulham Palace, I owe much; but much more to its delightful inhabitants, whom I cannot leave without great regret. Among other pleasing circumstances, I have here had an opportunity of renewing my acquaintance with some very respectable friends, whom I was formerly

* This alludes to his eldest son's performance on that instrument.

much connected with, but had not seen these fourteen years; particularly Lord Viscount Cremorne (formerly Lord Dartrey) and his lady, Mrs Boscawen (the Admiral's widow), and Mrs Garrick, who, notwithstanding her age, is still an elegant woman. I have also, once and again, met with Mr Horace Walpole, and had much conversation with him.* He is a very agreeable man, perfectly well bred, and of pleasant discourse; but it pains one to see him so miserably martyred by the gout, both in his feet and hands.

"Dining some days ago with Lord Guilford † at Bushy Park, I unexpectedly met with your friend, the Bishop of Kilaloe,‡ and his son. I presented your compliments to the Bishop, who asked particularly about Lady Forbes and you, and desired to be remembered to you. I was happy to find that Lord Guilford, though he has entirely lost his sight, is in perfect health and spirits, and retains all his wonted vivacity and good humour; of which he indeed possesses a very uncommon share. He wears no fillet on his eyes, nor needs any, as their outward appearance is not altered in the least. Mr and Lady Katharine Douglas§ dined there the same day, and are quite well: Lady Katharine is a most agreeable woman.

"Last week I made a morning visit to Mr Pitt.|| I had heard him spoken of as a grave and reserved man; but saw nothing of it. He gave me a very frank, and indeed affectionate reception; and was so cheerful, and in his conversation so easy, that I almost thought myself in the company, rather of an old acquaintance, than of a great statesman. He was pleased to pay me some very obliging

* The well known proprietor of Strawberry-Hill: afterwards Earl of Orford. He died 2d March, 1797, aged seventy-nine.

† Formerly Lord North, to whom, when minister, Dr Beattie had been so much obliged in the business of his pension, in the year 1773. See p. 176.

‡ Dr Barnard, now Bishop of Limerick.

§ Now Lord Glenbervie, married to Lady Katharine North, Lord Guilford's eldest daughter. See p. 106.

|| I lament, for the sake of my country and of Europe, to have at the period of this publication, the melancholy necessity of recording the death of this eminent and excellent statesman. He died on the 23d January, 1806, at the early age of forty-six.

compliments, asked about my health, and how I meant to pass the summer; spoke of the Dutchess of Gordon, the improvements of Edinburgh, and various other matters: and when I told him, I knew not what apology to make for intruding upon him, said, that no apology was necessary, for that he was very glad to see me, and desired to see me again."

LETTER CCXXVII.

DR BEATTIE TO MISS VALENTINE.

Sandleford, Berkshire, 27th July, 1791.

"BATH is a town about twice as large as Aberdeen, and situated in the bottom of a deep and narrow valley, overhung with steep hills on every side; so that there is hardly such a thing to be felt there as a fresh breeze. The soil is white chalk, which on the surface of the ground is pounded, by the feet of animals, and the wheels of carriages, into a fine powder, which, in dry weather, is continually flying about, and drawn in with the breath, proved most offensive to my lungs, though they are not easily affected; in wet weather it covers all the level and narrow streets with a deep mire. The heat of the place is, as you will readily suppose, very great; and the air much more close and stifling than that of London. Some of the streets are, in respect of architecture, very elegant, if they be not too gaudy and too much ornamented; but, on the whole, it is an irregular and very inconvenient town. Being all built of free-stone, (an uncommon thing in England) it has more the air of a Scotch town than of an English one; the English towns being for the most part of brick; and it put me more in mind of Edinburgh than any other place I have seen. Montagu will tell you more of it hereafter. The water of the pump, at least of that pump at which I was desired to drink, is so warm as to raise the mercury in the thermometer to 103: The common fountain-water is clear and cool, and indeed very good.

"At Bath, though my stay was so short, I met with some very agreeable people, particularly two ladies (to whom I was recom-

mended by Miss Hannah More), and Mr Wilberforce.* This gentleman, whom you know I was very anxious to see, is for those virtues that most adorn human nature, one of the most distinguished characters of the age; and withal a man of great wit, cheerful conversation, exemplary piety, and uncommon abilities; I am sorry to see he is not robust; I am afraid his health is too delicate. I was with him part of three days. He is very partial to me, and showed me every possible attention, and was very kind to Montagu."

In the year 1790,† Dr Beattie had published the first volume of "Elements of Moral Science;" the second volume did not make its appearance until the year 1793. In an advertisement prefixed to the first volume, he informs us, that they contain an Abridgment, and, for the most part, a very brief one, of his Lectures on Moral Philosophy and Logic, delivered in Marischal College. It had long been his practice, he says, with a view of assisting the memory of his hearers, to make them write *notes* of each discourse. This practice, although it strongly evinces Dr Beattie's great attention to the instruction of his pupils, was not without its disadvantages, both to them and to himself.

As these notes were written in the lecture-room, many hours were necessarily consumed in that manner, which might have been

* William Wilberforce, Esq. M. P. for the county of York, the strenuous promoter, in the House of commons, of the abolition of the slave-trade; author of "A Practical View of the prevailing Religious System of professed Christians in the higher and middle classes in this Country, contrasted with real Christianity."

† I must not omit to mention here a circumstance respecting the publication of the "Elements of Moral Science," very much to the credit of Dr Beattie. On his writing to me to dispose of the Manuscript, to be printed in octavo, I applied to his Bookseller, who made offer of a sum of money for the copy-right; adding, however, that he could afford to give more if the book were to be printed in quarto. On my mentioning this to Dr Beattie, he immediately answered, "No; I do not wish, for the sake of profit to myself, to increase the price to my students, many of whom can but ill afford to purchase an expensive publication." It accordingly never has been printed in quarto.

more usefully employed in listening to the teacher. As they were also written in haste, they were very often inaccurate; and, by an unavoidable consequence, many manuscript copies had got into the world, and even some part into print, incomplete, as well as incorrect, with more imperfections, says Dr Beattie, than could reasonably be imputed to the author. To remedy both these evils he was intreated to publish these notes himself, and thus put it in the power of his students to procure correct copies of the whole summary, a little enlarged in the doctrinal parts, and with the addition of a few illustrative examples. Such is the account Dr Beattie gives of the publication of his "Elements of Moral Science." He adds farther, in the same advertisement, that he presumes nobody will be offended, if in these papers there be found, as there certainly will, numberless thoughts and arguments, which may be found elsewhere. It will be considered, he says, that as a professed province is generally assigned him by public authority, his business is rather to collect and arrange his materials, than to invent or make them. In his illustrations, in order to render what he teaches as perspicuous and entertaining as possible, he may give ample scope to his inventive powers; but in preparing a *summary* of his principles, he will be more solicitous to make a collection of useful truths, however old, than to amuse his readers with paradox, and theories of his own contrivance. And let it be considered farther, he adds, that as all the practical, and most of the speculative, parts of moral science, have been frequently and fully explained by the ablest writers, he would, if he should affect novelty in these matters, neither do justice to his subject, nor easily clear himself from the charge of ostentation.

Notwithstanding this modest declaration on the part of the author, we should do great injustice to the work, were we to suppose it to be no more than a mere prospectus or syllabus of a course of lectures on moral philosophy. In a certain degree, no doubt, it may be considered as a text-book; but in general so copious, so luminous in the arrangement, so perspicuous in the language, and so excellent in the sentiments it every where inculcates, that if the profound metaphysician and logician do not find in it that depth of science which they may expect to meet with in other works of greater erudition, the candid inquirer after truth may rest satisfied, that if he has studied these "Elements" with due attention, he

will have laid a solid foundation, on which to build all the knowledge of the subject necessary for the common purposes of life. Some of the topics are no doubt treated with more, some with less, brevity. Of such of the lectures as have already, under the name of "Essays," been published in the same form in which they were at first composed, particularly those on "The Theory of Language," and "On Memory, and Imagination," Dr Beattie has made this abridgment as brief as was consistent with any degree of perspicuity; while he has bestowed no less than seventy pages on his favourite topic, the *Abolition of the Slave-trade*, and the subjects of *Slavery* connected with it. On the *Slave-trade*, indeed, Dr Beattie felt the strongest and warmest interest in favour of the poor Africans; and he had employed himself, during five-and-twenty years, in collecting materials and information for the purpose of writing and publishing an essay in behalf of that unhappy people. In the mean time, he contrived to interweave into his lectures much of the substance of his projected essay; and while the business was pending in Parliament, and he waited with anxious expectation the success of the efforts of Mr Wilberforce and his friends towards effecting the abolition of the trade, Dr Beattie comforted himself with the reflection, not only that he was doing his duty, by raising his voice against the traffic, but that many of his pupils in the various vicissitudes of life, being led to the West Indies, might carry his principles with them; and thus contribute, in a certain degree, to improve the unhappy condition of the negroes in our colonies.* His "Essay on Slavery," however, was never published: nor do I find any other trace of it among his papers, than what is to be met with in this summary of his lectures on the subject.

Dr Beattie has divided his course of lectures into four parts, viz. *Psychology*, *Natural Theology*, *Moral Philosophy*, and *Logic*. These, again, he has subdivided into a variety of subordinate parts. Under the first part, he has treated of the *Perceptive Faculties*, and of *the Active Powers of Man*. In the second, or that on *Natural Theology*, he has devoted two chapters to the consideration of the *Divine Existence* and *Divine Attributes*; the proofs of which he deduces from what we feel within ourselves, and what we perceive

* See p. 243.

in contemplating created nature around us. To this he has added an appendix on the *Immateriality* and *Immortality of the Soul*. His second volume, or that division of his subject which comprehends *Moral Philosophy*, commences with *Ethics*, under which head he gives a general delineation of virtue, as well as of the nature and foundation of particular virtues, comprehending those duties which we owe to God, to one another, and to ourselves. *Economics* then follow, comprehending the relative duties of life; in which part it is, that he takes occasion to treat so largely of *Slavery*, and particularly that of the negroes. The third part contains two chapters on the General Nature of Law, and the Origin and Nature of Civil Government. To this succeeds *Logic*, comprehending *Rhetoric* and *Belles Lettres*, and containing much beautiful and valuable criticism on style and composition of various sorts; which he who wishes to form a good style, and to excel in composition of any kind, either prose or verse, will do well to study with attention.* The whole is concluded by some *Remarks on Evidence*.

To give a more copious analysis is not necessary here, as those who wish to be better acquainted with the work, will naturally have recourse to the book itself; which they will find to contain the most interesting truths, explained in a popular but convincing manner, in which elegance, variety, and harmony of style, are united with simplicity, and the subjects illustrated by familiar allusions to history and common life, in such a manner as may not only amuse the fancy, but instruct the understanding, and improve the heart.

But there is one excellence of Dr Beattie's "Lectures on "Moral Philosophy," on which I cannot but dwell with peculiar emphasis; and that is, his happy manner of fortifying his arguments from natural religion, on the most important points, by the aid of revelation. While he details, with precision, the proofs which natural reason alone affords, he never omits any proper opportunity of appealing to revelation in support of his doctrine, sometimes in the very words of Scripture, at other times by a general reference to the subject, as it is to be learned there; thus

* The diligent student, however, will not content himself with this abridgment, but will carefully peruse what is said at large on the head, in Dr Beattie's Essays and Dissertations on "Poetry," and "The Theory of "Language."

making them mutually support and strengthen each other, as ought ever to be the study of every teacher of ethics. Dr Beattie is, therefore, justly entitled to the most distinguished of all appellations, that of A CHRISTIAN MORAL PHILOSOPHER.*

* An eminent Professor of Moral Philosophy, Dr Ferguson, whose "Lectures," delivered in the university of Edinburgh, have been published since he resigned his chair, has the following observation:

"It may be asked, perhaps, why he (the Professor) should restrict his "argument, as he has done, to the mere topics of Natural Religion and Rea-"son? This, being the foundation of every superstructure, whether in mora-"lity or religion, and, therefore, to be separately treated, he considered as "that part of the work which was allotted to him. Farther institutions may "improve, but cannot supersede, what the Almighty has revealed in his "works, and in the suggestions of reason to man.

"When first we from the teeming womb were brought,
"With inborn precepts, then our souls were fraught."
ROWE'S *Lucan*, lib. ix. l. 984.

"And what the Author of our nature has so taught, must be considered as "the test of every subsequent institution that is offered as coming from "Him."†

In this concluding sentiment, Dr Ferguson is no doubt perfectly right; and yet I cannot but presume totally to differ from him in regard to his maxim of confining himself to arguments drawn from natural religion and reason alone. The consequences of such a mode of teaching appear to me extremely hazardous: for if the Professor shall state an argument, amounting to any strong degree of probability, which at the best is the utmost he can do, there is danger that the student may rest satisfied with the reasoning, and, leaving revelation entirely out of the question, may not seek to carry his inquiries any farther. If, on the contrary, he derive no solid conviction from the use of mere reasoning, the risk is, that he sink into decided scepticism and infidelity.

Dr Beattie, on the contrary, while he does ample justice to his arguments from reason, never loses sight of the Gospel, as the sole anchor of a Christian's hope. As a proof of this, take the following among many instances that might be produced from the book now before us. The sentiments enforced are so transcendently beautiful, that they never can be out of place or season, wherever they may be found.

In his second chapter of *Natural Theology*, speaking of the divine attributes, he says: "Revelation gives such a display of the divine goodness, as "must fill us with the most ardent gratitude and adoration. For in it we

† Prefatory advertisement to "Principles of Moral and Political Science," by Adam Ferguson, LL. D. p. vii.

LETTER CCXXVIII.

DR BEATTIE TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 17th April, 1793.

"I AM very happy in your and Mr Fraser Tytler's approbation of my book; as also Sir William Forbes's and our Principal's, who read it in manuscript. General approbation I do not

"find, that God has put it in our power, notwithstanding our degeneracy "and unworthiness, to be happy both in this world and for ever; a hope "which reason alone could never have permitted us to entertain on any "ground of certainty. And here we may repeat what was already hinted "at, that although the right use of reason supplies our first notions of the "divine nature, yet it is from revelation that we receive those distinct ideas "of His attributes and providence, which are the foundation of our dearest "hopes. The most enlightened of the Heathen had no certain knowledge "of His unity, spirituality, eternity, wisdom, justice, or mercy; and, by "consequence, could never contrive a comfortable system of natural religion, "as Socrates the wisest of them acknowledged."*

In his lecture on the Immortality of the Soul, he thus introduces the subject: "It is unnecessary to prove to a Christian, that his soul will never die; "because he believes, that life and immortality have been brought to light "by the Gospel. But though not necessary, it may be useful to lay before "him those arguments, whereby the immortality of the soul might be made "appear, even to those who never heard of revelation, probable in the "highest degree,"† &c. &c.

In treating of the Divine Attributes, Dr Beattie says, "It is reasonable "to think, that a Being infinitely good, must also be of infinite mercy: but "still the purity and justice of God must convey the most alarming thoughts "to those who know themselves to have been, in instances without number, "inexcusably criminal. But from what is revealed in Scripture, concerning "the divine dispensations with respect to man, we learn, that on performing certain conditions, we shall be forgiven and received into favour, by "means which at once display the divine mercy in the most amiable light, "and fully vindicate the divine justice.

"It is indeed impossible to understand the doctrines of our religion, and "not to *wish at least* that they may be true: for they exhibit the most com-

* "Elements of Moral Science," Vol. I. p. 468. † Ibid. p. 276.

expect. The plainness of the style will, by our fashionable writers, be termed vulgarity; the practical tendency of the whole will satisfy our speculative metaphysicians, that the author must be shallow and superficial, and a dealer in common-place observations; and the deference that is paid in it to the doctrines of Christianity, will, by all our Frenchified critics, be considered as a proof, that he is no philosopher. You observe very justly, that the science of morality has not often, at least in modern times, been so treated, as

"fortable views of God and his providence; they recommend the purest and "most perfect morality; and they breathe nothing throughout, but benevo- "lence, equity, and peace: and one may venture to affirm, that no man "ever *wished* the Gospel to be true, who did not *find* it so."*

Discoursing of *the Nature of Virtue*, Dr Beattie says, "These specula- "tions might lead into a labyrinth of perplexity, if it were not for what re- "velation declares concerning the divine government. It declares, that man "may expect, on the performance of certain conditions, not only pardon, but "everlasting happiness; not on account of his own merit, which in the sight "of God is nothing, but on account of the infinite merits of the Redeemer, "who, descending from the height of glory, voluntarily underwent the pun- "ishment due to sin, and thus obtained those high privileges for as many as "should comply with the terms announced by him to mankind."† Again,

"It is the belief of a future state of retribution, that satisfies the rational "mind of the infinite rectitude of the divine government; and it is this per- "suasion only, that can make the virtuous happy in the present life. And "if we could not without revelation, entertain a well-grounded hope of fu- "ture reward, it is only the virtue of the true Christian that can obtain the "happiness we now speak of.‡

"Though all men are sinners, yet some are highly respectable on ac- "count of their goodness; and there are crimes so atrocious, perjury for ex- "ample, that one single perpetration makes a man infamous. The Scripture "expressly declares, that, in the day of judgment, it will be more tolerable "for some criminals than for others; and not obscurely insinuates, that the "future exaltation of the righteous will be in proportion to their virtue."§

Speaking of *Piety*, or the *Duties we owe to God*, he says, "How far the "deplorable condition of many of the human race, with respect to false re- "ligion, barbarous life, and an exclusion, hitherto unsurmountable, from all "means of intellectual improvement, may extenuate, or whether it may not, "by virtue of the great atonement, entirely cancel the imperfection of those "to whom in this world God never was, or without a miracle could be, "known, we need not inquire. It is enough for us to know, that for *our* "ignorance we can plead no such apology."‖

* "Elements of Moral Science," Vol. I. p. 402. † Ibid. Vol. II. p. 81.
‡ Ibid. p. 89. § Ibid. p. 77. ‖ Ibid. p. 80.

to show its connection with practice; but I have always considered morality as a practical science; and, in every other part of literature, I do not see the use of those speculations that can be applied to no practical purpose. It may be said, that they exercise the human faculties, and so qualify men for being casuists and disputants; but casuistry and disputation are not the business for which man is sent into the world; although I grant, that they may sometimes, like dancing and playing at cards, serve as an amusement to those who have acquired a taste for them, and have nothing else to do."

In the month of October, 1793, Dr Beattie was much affected by the sudden death of his favorite sister, Mrs Valentine.* She

On the subject of *Public Worship*, he says, "These considerations alone "would recommend external worship as a most excellent means of improving "our moral nature. But Christians know farther, that this duty is expressly commanded; and that particular blessings are promised to the devout "performance of it. In us, therefore, the neglect of it must be inexcusable, and highly criminal †

"That principle which restrains malevolent passions, by disposing us to "render to every one his own, is called justice: a principle of great extent, "and which may not improperly be said to form a part of every virtue; as "in every vice there is something of injustice towards God, our fellow men, "or ourselves. As far as our fellow men are concerned, the great rule of "justice is, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye "even so to them:' a precept which, in this its complete form, we owe to "the Gospel; and which, for its clearness and reasonableness, for being "easily remembered, and on all occasions easily applied to practice, can "never be too much admired."‡

Such was the mode of teaching moral philosophy practised by Dr Beattie, during the long course of upwards of thirty years in his public lectures at Aberdeen. Let the reader compare those animating and comfortable doctrines inculcated by this excellent writer, with the cold and cheerless speculations of natural reason alone, and then let him say which method most deserves the preference, or is most likely to promote the happiness of mankind.

* Widow of Captain John Valentine, who commanded a merchant-vessel belonging to the town of Montrose, where his family resided.

† "Elements of Moral Science." Vol. II. p. 83. ‡ Ibid. p. 98.

had left her house apparently in perfect health; but having been taken ill in the street, was carried home speechless, and expired in a few days. His mother had also died suddenly of an apoplexy.* From several of his letters about this time, he appears also to have believed himself to be dangerously ill. At this period, indeed, his health was so bad, that he found himself unequal to the task of teaching his class as usual: he, therefore, engaged Mr George Glennie, who had been his pupil, to assist him during the session of the university 1793–4. He continued, however, to teach his class occasionally, until the commencement of the winter-session of the year 1797.

The Reverend Dr Campbell, on perusing Mr Fraser Tytler's "Essay on the Principles of Translation," had been struck with a coincidence of the author's sentiments in regard to the fundamental laws of the art, with those general principles, which he himself had briefly laid down in one of his preliminary dissertations to his "New "Translation of the Gospels," and had expressed some suspicion, that the author of the "Essay on Translation" had seen that dissertation, which was published a short time before his essay. Of the groundlessness of this suspicion, Mr Fraser Tytler very soon convinced that respectable writer, as he candidly owned in the amplest and most handsome terms of apology. The following passage in Dr Beattie's letter relates to this subject.

* Dr Beattie's mother resided, for several years before her death, with her son David, in the neighbourhood of Lawrence-kirk, during which period Dr Beattie showed her every mark of attention in his power. She died there at a very advanced age. See Letter XXV. to Mrs Valentine, p. 80.

LETTER CCXXIX.

DR BEATTIE TO ALEX. FRASER TYTLER, ESQ. NOW LORD WOODHOUSELEE.

Aberdeen, 17th November, 1793.

"I NEEDED no information on the subject of your last. As you had not mentioned our friend Dr Campbell's "Translation "of the Gospels," or the critical dissertations prefixed to it, I was very certain that you had neither borrowed any thing from him, nor even read that learned and excellent work; and I told him so, and easily persuaded him that it was so. Your letter to him I read very attentively; and as I new there was nothing in it which he would or could disapprove, I sealed and gave it to him. He is, I assure you, perfectly satisfied, as I dare say he has told you before now. On such a subject it is hardly possible that two men of sense and learning could differ in opinion; and, therefore, it is no wonder that there should be such a coincidence of your sentiments with his. I have thought, and written too, on the same subject, and I agree most cordially with you both.

"You did me much honour when you asked me to write a short historical account of our dear departed friend, your father. To do so would be an agreeable employment to me; as I have sometimes been inclined to think, that next to the pleasure of conversing with a living friend, is that of meditating on the virtues of a deceased one. The last is indeed a melancholy pleasure, but is not perhaps on that account the less delightful. But of late, since my health became so bad, I sometimes think I shall never be in a condition to write any more. I am so much disheartened and stupefied by this vertigo, to say nothing of my other complaints, that I frequently lose the command of my thoughts, and become incapable of all mental exertion. However, if I should get a little better, and if there is no occasion for haste in preparing the biographical account of your father, it may still perhaps be in my power to attempt it.*

* This Dr Beattie never accomplished. An excellent biographical sketch of the Life of Mr Tytler, by Henry Mackenzie, Esq. is printed in the "Trans-"actions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh," Vol. IV. p. 33. See Appendix, [O.]: and p. 80.

I am at a loss to know how to find Dr Anderson's account, for I seldom see his periodical work; and with reviews and magazines I am still less acquainted.

"If you see Sir William Forbes or Mr Arbuthnot, please to show them this letter. It will account for my writing so seldom to them of late."

LETTER CCXXX.

THE BISHOP OF LONDON TO DR BEATTIE.

Fulham-house, 25th June, 1794.

"I HAVE the pleasure of inclosing to you a letter from my friend, Lady Cremorne, who writes to thank you for the very great pleasure she has received from the perusal of your son's "Life" and the English part of his works. To her acknowledgments I must add my own and Mrs Porteus's, who are both of us no less delighted with this publication. Among the Latin poems I am particularly pleased with the "Translation of the Messiah." In the "Life" you have written of him, you have erected a lasting monument to him and to yourself. It will for ever remain a striking proof of his learning, genius, piety, benevolence, and goodness of heart, and of your paternal tenderness, sensibility, and attachment, to a son, so worthy of your affection. I lament greatly, that his uncommon diffidence, modesty, and reserve, when he was with us at Hunton, prevented us from knowing so much of his true character, and from testifying so strong a sense of it as we ought to have done.

"There is something very ingenious and pleasing in the method you took to give him the first idea of a Supreme Being. It has all the imagination of Rousseau, without his folly and extravagance. I make no doubt that the deep impression this incident left on his mind, was the true ground-work of that sublime sense of piety which afterwards animated his whole conduct.*

* The passage here alluded to, in the "Account of his Son's Life," is as follows:

"The first rules of morality I taught him were, to speak truth, and keep "a secret; and I never found that in a single instance he transgressed either.

"The sources from whence you received your information respecting the West Indies, seem very sufficient to justify what you have said. I am now looking out for missionaries and schoolmas-

"The doctrines of religion I wished to impress on his mind, as soon as it "might be prepared to receive them; but I did not see the propriety of mak- "ing him commit to memory theological sentences, or any sentences, which "it was not possible for him to understand. And I was desirous to make a "trial how far his own reason could go in tracing out, with a little direction, "the great and first principle of all religion, the being of GOD. The follow- "ing fact is mentioned, not as a proof of superior sagacity in him (for I have "no doubt that most children would in like circumstances think as he did), "but merely as a moral or logical experiment.

"He had reached his fifth (or sixth) year, knew the alphabet, and could "read a little; but had received no particular information with respect to "the Author of his being: because I thought he could not yet understand "such information; and because I had learned from my own experience, that "to be made to repeat words not understood, is extremely detrimental to the "faculties of a young mind. In a corner of a little garden, without informing "any person of the circumstance, I wrote in the mould, with my finger, the "three initial letters of his name; and sowing garden-cresses in the furrows, "covered up the seed, and smoothed the ground. Ten days after, he came "running to me, and with astonishment in his countenance told me, that his "name was growing in the garden. I smiled at the report, and seemed in- "clined to disregard it; but he insisted on my going to see what had happen- "ed. Yes, said I carelessly, on coming to the place, I see it is so; but there "is nothing in this worth notice; it is mere chance: and I went away. He "followed me, and, taking hold of my coat, said with some earnestness, it "could not be mere chance; for that somebody must have contrived matters "so as to produce it.—I pretend not to give his words, or my own, for I have "forgotten both; but I give the substance of what passed between us in "such language as we both understood.—So you think, I said, that what "appears so regular as the letters of your name cannot be by chance. Yes, "said he, with firmness, I think so. Look at yourself, I replied, and consider "your hands and fingers, your legs and feet, and other limbs; are they not "regular in their appearance, and useful to you? He said, they were. Came "you then hither, said I, by chance? No, he answered, that cannot be; "something must have made me. And who is that something, I asked. He "said, he did not know. (I took particular notice, that he did not say, as "Rousseau fancied a child in like circumstances would say, that his parents "made him.) I had now gained the point I aimed at: and saw, that his "reason taught him, (though he could not so express it) that what begins to "be must have a cause, and that what is formed with regularity must have "an intelligent cause. I therefore told him the name of the Great Being who "made him and all the world; concerning whose adorable nature I gave him

fers to send to that country; and if you know any young man that would be a proper person for either of those occupations, please to inform me. His character must be irreproachable; and his piety and zeal, in the great cause of religion, must be fervent, yet tempered with discretion.

"The last news from Flanders are very dispiriting*. The numbers of the French are so great, that it seems to me impossible for all the powers of Europe to withstand them. When I look only to human means, and the common course of affairs, I totally despair. But I trust that God, who has so often interposed in our favour, will once more rescue us from that torrent of anarchy, confusion, infidelity, and misery, which seem ready to overwhelm us. And it is this hope alone which sustains my spirits, and supports my mind."

While Dr Beattie was thus suffering by the deplorable state of his own health, shattered by a long train of nervous complaints, originally brought on by too intense application to study, he was about to experience another domestic misfortune in the loss of his only surviving son, Montagu Beattie, who very unexpectedly died at Aberdeen on the 14th March, 1796, in the eighteenth year of his age, of a fever of only a week's continuance.

Ever since he lost his eldest son, this his second son had been the great object of his attention. The characters indeed of the two young men were extremely different. The eldest was grave, studious, and reserved; the other was lively, and of popular manners; nor was he defective in genius, though far inferior to his elder brother in learning. His progress in science had not indeed been considerable; partly owing to bad health, which had prevented his regular attendance at school and college, and partly, perhaps, to his father's having kept him too much with himself: for he was always extremely dependent on the society, and even on the assistance, of

"such information as I thought he could in some measure comprehend. The "lesson affected him greatly, and he never forgot either it, or the circum-"stance that introduced it."

* This was during the course of the war in that country, in which Great Britain was then engaged.

his children. His friends used to think, too, that in his system of education, he erred on the score of personal indulgence: yet Montagu had suffered less in that respect than might have been supposed; for, as Dr Beattie had been so long in the habit of teaching, and as he bestowed all the time he could possibly spare on his son's instruction, he tells us himself in one of his letters, that scarce a day passed in which he did not give him a lesson of one sort or other; and he speaks of his progress in literature as by no means contemptible.

The care of this his youngest son's education, and the plans he was devising for his future establishment in the world, served to fill up his time after he lost his eldest son, and proved a tie that continued to connect him with society. On this subject he and I had frequent conferences; in the course of which he informed me, that he had done me the honour to appoint me one of those friends to whom he had left the charge of his son, if we should survive him. He had therefore expressed himself to me on this interesting topic with uncommon energy and unreserve; and he had occasionally spoken of his intention to make his son a clergyman of the church of England; for which profession the youth himself showed some inclination. With such views and such prospects, Dr Beattie was pleasing himself; when all at once they were destroyed by his son's unexpected death. Of that melancholy event he gives a most interesting and affecting account in the following letter.

LETTER CCXXXI.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 14th March, 1796.

"OUR plans relating to Montagu are all at an end. I am sorry to give you the pain of being informed, that he died this morning at five. His disorder was a fever, from which at first we had little apprehension; but it cut him off in five days. He himself thought from the beginning that it would be fatal; and, before the delirium came on, spoke with great composure and Christian piety of his approaching dissolution: he even gave some

directions about his funeral. The delirium was very violent, and continued till within a few minutes of his death, when he was heard to repeat in a whisper the Lord's prayer, and began an unfinished sentence, of which nothing could be heard but the words *incorruptible glory*. Pious sentiments prevailed in his mind through life, and did not leave him till death; nor then I trust did they leave him. Notwithstanding the extreme violence of his fever, he seemed to suffer little pain either in body or in mind, and as his end drew near, a smile settled upon his countenance. I need not tell you that he had every attention that skilful and affectionate physicians could bestow. I give you the trouble to notify this event to Mr Arbuthnot. I would have written to him, but have many things to mind, and but indifferent health. However, I heartily acquiesce in the dispensations of Providence, which are all good and wise. God bless you and your family.

"He will be much regretted; for wherever he went he was a very popular character."

The death of his only surviving child, completely unhinged the mind of Dr Beattie, the first symptom of which, ere many days had elapsed, was a temporary but almost total loss of memory respecting his son. Many times he could not recollect what had become of him; and after searching in every room of the house, he would say to his niece, Mrs Glennie, "You may think it strange, but I "must ask you if I have a son, and where he is?" She then felt herself under the painful necessity of bringing to his recollection his son Montagu's sufferings, which always restored him to reason. And he would often, with many tears, express his thankfulness, that he had no child, saying, "How could I have borne to see their "elegant minds mangled with madness!"* When he looked for the last time on the dead body of his son, he said, "I have now done "with the world:" and he ever after seemed to act as if he thought so. For he never applied himself to any sort of study, and answered but few of the letters he received from the friends whom he most valued. Yet the receiving a letter from an old friend never failed

* Alluding, no doubt, to their mother's melancholy situation.

to put him in spirits for the rest of the day. Music, which had been his great delight, he could not endure, after the death of his eldest son, to hear from others; and he disliked his own favourite violoncello. A few months before Montagu's death, he did begin to play a little by way of accompaniment when Montagu sung: but after he lost him, when he was prevailed on to touch the violoncello, he was always discontented with his own performance, and at last seemed to be unhappy when he heard it. The only enjoyment he seemed to have was in books, and the society of a very few old friends. It is impossible to read the melancholy picture which he draws of his own situation about this time, without dropping a tear of pity over the sorrows and the sufferings of so good a man, thus severely visited by affliction, who at the same time was bearing the rod of divine chastisement with the utmost patience and resignation.

LETTER CCXXXII.

THE BISHOP OF LONDON TO DR BEATTIE.

London-house, 23d March, 1796.

"I CAN scarce recollect a time when I have been more surprised and afflicted than at the receipt of your last letter. It is indeed a sad and most dismal event; and both Mrs Porteus and myself most cordially sympathize with you in your loss and in your grief. At the same time, there are circumstances in the case, which give no small consolation to our minds. The faith, the piety, the fortitude, displayed by so young a man on so awful an occasion, do infinite credit to him, and must afford the highest satisfaction to you. And it is with no less pleasure I observe the composure and resignation with which you support this great calamity. It shows in the strongest light the power of Christian principle over the mind; and it shows also from what source this excellent and amiable young man derived those virtues which adorned his short life and dignified his premature death.

"But I will dwell no longer on this melancholy subject; nor will I at present obtrude any trifling matters on your serious mo-

ments. When time has a little lightened the pressure of this affliction, I will write to you again; and, in the meanwhile, implore for you all the comforts of religion."

LETTER CCXXXIII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. DR LAING.

Aberdeen, 10th April, 1796.

"I WISHED to answer your kind letter as soon as I received it, or as soon after as possible; but the very interesting and painful suspense I was kept in by Dr Campbell's illness, disqualified me for writing and every thing else. His illness was so violent, that, considering his age and enfeebled state, and some other disorders which I knew he was afflicted with, I did not at first imagine that he could live two days. To the surprise of every body, however, he held out, almost a week, though unable to speak, and for a great part of the time delirious. His death at last was easy, and he died as he had lived, a sincere Christian: we yesterday paid our last duties to his remains. He and I were intimate friends for about thirty-eight years, without any interval of coldness or dissatisfaction. His instructive and cheerful conversation was one of the greatest blessings of my life, and I shall cherish the remembrance of it, with gratitude to the Giver of all good, as long as I live.

"His death was looked for, and by himself much desired. Montagu's came upon me in a different manner. His delirium, which was extremely violent, ended in a state of such apparent tranquillity, that I was congratulating myself on the danger being over, at the very time when Dr ***** came, and told me, in his own name, and in that of the other two physicians that attended Montagu, that he could not live many hours: this was at eleven at night, and he died at five next morning. I hope I am resigned, as my duty requires, and as I wish to be; but I have passed many a bitter hour, though on those occasions nobody sees me. I fear my reason is a little disordered, for I have sometimes thought of late, especially in

a morning, that Montagu is not dead, though I seem to have a remembrance of a dream that he is. This, you will say, what I myself believe, is a symptom not uncommon in cases similar to mine, and that I ought by all means to go from home as soon as I can. I will do so when the weather becomes tolerable. Inclination would draw me to Peterhead; but the intolerable road forbids it, and I believe I must go southward, where the roads are very good: at least I hear so.

"Being now childless, by the will of Providence, (in which I trust I acquiesce) I have made a new settlement in my small affairs; the only particular of which that needs to be mentioned at present is, that the organ, built by my eldest son and you, is now yours.

"I am much obliged to the kind friends who sympathize with me. Montagu was indeed very popular wherever he went. His death was calm, resigned, and unaffectedly pious; he thought himself dying from the first attack of his illness. "I could wish," said he, "to live to be old, but am neither afraid nor unwilling to die."

LETTER CCXXXIV.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 17th April, 1796.

"I HAVE been these many days resolving to write to you and Mr Arbuthnot, to thank you for your very kind and sympathetic letters, but various things have come in my way to prevent it. I need not pretend a hurry of business, for every body knows I am not capable of any. A deep gloom hangs upon me and disables all my faculties, and thoughts so strange sometimes occur to me, as to make me "fear that I am not," as Lear says, "in my perfect "mind." But I thank God I am entirely resigned to the divine will; and, though I am now childless, I have friends whose goodness to me, and other virtues, I find great comfort in recollecting. The physicians not only advise but intreat, and indeed command me, to go from home, and that without further delay: and I do seriously resolve to set out for Edinburgh to-morrow. As I shall travel slowly, it will perhaps be a week or more before I see you. At another time, and in different circumstances, I should have had

much to say on the loss of our friend, Dr Campbell, but that subject, as well as some others, I must defer till we meet."

LETTER CCXXXV.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 17th April, 1796.

"I THANK you most cordially for your letter, so full of kindness and sympathy, and by consequence of comfort, to my bewildered mind. I trust that in resignation, to the will of the supremely wise and good Disposer of all events, I am not deficient; but my frailties are many, and I cannot yet counteract the pressure that bears so hard upon me. Time and recollection will, I hope, give some strength to my faculties, and restore to me the power of commanding my thoughts. The physicians, who see how it is with me, not only advise but command me to go from home, without further delay: and I intend to begin to-morrow, to try at least what I can do in the way of travelling. My first course will be towards Edinburgh, where I shall stay two or three weeks; and if I find I am able, I shall probably after that go a little way into England: but whether I shall find it advisable to proceed as far as London, I cannot as yet determine.

"My son Montagu sleeps in his brother's grave; the depth of which allows sufficient room for both. The inscription I have enlarged a little, and inclose a copy: its only merit is its simplicity and truth.

MONTAGU. BEATTIE.
Jacobi. Hay. Beattie. Fraser.
Ejusque. Virtutum. et. Studiorum.
Æmulus.
Sepulchrique. Consors.
Variarum. Peritus. Artium.
Pingendi. imprimis.
Natus. Octavo. Julii. MDCCLXXVIII.
Multum. Defletus. Obiit.
Decimo. Quarto. Martii. MDCCXCVI.

LETTER CCXXXVI.

DR BEATTIE TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 9th February, 1797.

"If I could have said any thing that would mitigate your grief for the loss of a most deserving son,* your own heart will testify for me that I would not have been so long silent. But I have had too much experience not to know, that the only sources of comfort, in a case of this kind, are submission to the Divine Will, aided by the slow and silent operation of time. God grant that these may be effectual for the alleviation of your sorrow. Think on the many other blessings you enjoy; and think that the most enviable of all deaths is that which we now bewail, an honourable death in the service of our country. I beg leave to offer my best wishes and sympathy to Mrs Arbuthnot and the rest of your family; and shall be happy to hear, that you and they are as well as it is reasonable to expect.

"I sometimes make an excursion to Major Mercer's, which is the only sort of visit I ever attempt; and he and I are I hope beneficial to each other; though his affliction is, I fear, in some respects heavier than either yours or mine. Alas! how many things occur in this world, which are worse than death!"

The following letter to Mr Fraser Tytler, now Lord Woodhouselee,† in return for a present which that gentleman had made him of a new edition of his elegant and excellent "Essay on Trans-"lation," is written with more of Dr Beattie's former manner, than any I have met with of his, after the death of his youngest son. It does no more than justice to the merit of the "Essay on Transla-"tion," and it is curious, as containing an account and a specimen of a work not frequently to be met with.

* A very deserving officer of artillery, who died at this time in the West Indies.

† See Appendix, [F.]

LETTER CCXXXVII.

DR BEATTIE TO ALEX. FRASER TYTLER, ESQ. NOW LORD WOODHOUSELEE.

Aberdeen, 15th May, 1797.

"EVER since March I have been, as I still am, in a great degree, crippled both in my legs and arms by rheumatism, which has been very painful, and is likely to be not less durable. This made me, from time to time, defer attempting to thank you for the much-esteemed present of the new edition of your "Principles of "Translation." As yet I have read it only once; but I read it with much attention, and great pleasure, as well as instruction. I am astonished at the variety of your examples, which prove that you must have thought long and deeply on the subject; and I am convinced that your work will be very acceptable to the learned world, and very useful. Great taste, as well as learning, appears in every part of it. I must thank you, in particular, for the very favourable manner in which I have the honour to be quoted in it: for your very elegant compliment to my son I have thanked you, and I still thank you, with my tears. Had he lived to see your book, I know it would have given him much pleasure; for I have often heard him speak on the subject, and in terms which perfectly coincided with your sentiments.

"A judicious critic every body must acknowledge you to be, and yet you are very merciful, especially to Cowley and Dryden. This last frequently burlesques Virgil; whether he intended it, I know not; if he did not intend it, he must have been very little of a scholar. But who is equal to the task of translating Virgil? Nobody, I will venture to say, will ever attempt such a task who is equal to it. I formerly attempted some parts of him; but it was at a time when I understood him very superficially indeed.*

* Alluding to his translations of the Pastorals of Virgil, printed in the first edition of Dr Beattie's Poems, but never re-published. See p. 37, and Appendix, [K.]

"There is one translation which I greatly admire, but am sure you never saw, as you have not mentioned it: the book is indeed very rare; I obtained it, with difficulty, by the friendship of Tom Davies, an old English bookseller; I mean, Dobson's "Paradisus "Amissus;" my son studied, and I believe read every line of it. It is more true to the original, both in sense and in spirit, than any other poetical version of length that I have seen. The author must have had an amazing command of Latin phraseology, and a very nice ear in harmony. I shall give you a passage, I need not say from what part of the poem:

"Dixerat; et laetis dicta auribus hausit Adamus,
"At nil respondit; namque ollis maximus hospes
"Jam propior stetit; adversique a culmine montis
"Flammea præscriptam stationem adiere cherubûm
"Agmina, suspensis per humum labentia plantis.
"Ut nebula, ex fluviis se effundens vespere sero,
"Pervolitat densas liquido pede lapsa paludes,
"Agricolamque premit reducem, calcemque suburget.
"Undantes a fronte faces sublime vibratus
"Numinis evomuit gladius, ceu crine cometa
"Terribile lugubre rubens, cœlique benignam
"Temperiem invertit: torrenti incanduit atrox
"Igne vapor, quantus sitientibus incubat Afris.
"Corripit inde manu nostros utraque parentes
"Nuntius, increpitatque moras; portamque ad eoam
"Ducit agens, celsâque iterum de rupe jacentem
"Ocius in campum; tenues dein fugit in auras.
"Convertere oculos; lateque plagas Paradisi
"Eoas, sua tam nuper lætissima rura,
"Flammivomo mucrone vident ardescere; formisque
"Obsessam horrificis portam, et flagrantibus armis.
"Naturæ imperio lacrimas misere, repente
"Detersas: Patuit spatiosis tractibus orbis
"Terrarum, requiem optatam dulcesque recessus
"Quà peterent sibi cunque loca; et Deus adfuit auspex
"Tum vaga, lentaque, ducentes vestigia, palmis
"Connexis, solos Edeni abiere per agros."

"There are perhaps in this quotation two or three words which might have been better, and I am far from thinking the work faultless; but when there is so much excellence, cavilling is unreasonable.

" Being curious to know some particulars of Dobson, I inquired of him at Johnson, who owned he had known him, but did not seem inclined to speak on the subject. But Johnson hated Milton from his heart; and he wished to be himself considered as a good Latin poet, which however he never was, as may be seen by his translation of Pope's " Messiah." All that I could ever hear of Dobson's private life was, that in his old age he was given to drinking. My edition of his book is dated 1750. It is dedicated to Mr Benson, who was a famous admirer of Milton; and from the dedication it would seem to have been written at his desire and under his patronage."

LETTER CCXXXVIII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. DR LAING.

Aberdeen, 5th June, 1798.

" YOU would have heard from me long ago, if it had been in my power to write; but my complaints, which seem to grow worse every day, are now so bad, that I can do nothing. My vertigo, the greatest of them all, is now so violent, that I am for a great part of the day unable to go down stairs; my sight is much impaired; I cannot attend to what I read, and I forget almost every thing that I see or hear.

" I have been trying to play a little on the violoncello, but my fingers have not strength to press down the strings. I will send you, when I get an opportunity, a little treatise, by a man, proposing an improvement in the art of music. He wishes, like some other writers, to reduce all music to simple melody: a doctrine which old admirers of Corelli, like you and me, will never acquiesce in. It is the violin which he proposes to improve, by a method, which, in my opinion, would ruin that instrument. He thinks music an imitative art; and that a tune, which he calls the *Cameronian Rant*, is an exact resemblance of two women scolding. Mr Glennie plays the tune, which seems to me to be nothing but confusion and barbarism, and to bear no resemblance to any thing in art or

nature. Lord Monboddo, another adherent to the imitative notion, says, the only true music he ever heard, is the thing called *the Hen's March*; which no man who deserves to have ears in his head, would allow to be music at all.

"I have just seen a new edition, by Dr Joseph Warton, of the works of Pope. It is fuller than Warburton's; but you will not think it better, when I tell you, that all Pope's obscenities, which Warburton was careful to omit, are carefully preserved by Warton, who also seems to have a great favour for infidel writers, particularly Voltaire. The book is well printed, but has no cuts, except a curious caricature of Pope's person, and an elegant profile of his head."

LETTER CCXXXIX.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Peterhead, 3d August, 1798.

"I AM acquainted with many parts of your excursion through the north of England, and very glad that you had my old friend Mr Gray's "Letters" with you, which are indeed so well written, that I have no scruple to pronounce them the best letters that have been printed in our language. Lady Mary Montagu's "Letters" are not without merit, but are too artificial and affected to be confided in as true, and Lord Chesterfield's have much greater faults, indeed some of the greatest that letters can have: but Gray's letters are always sensible, and of classical conciseness and perspicuity. They very much resemble what his conversation was. He had none of the airs of either a scholar or a poet; and though on those and all other subjects he spoke to me with the utmost freedom, and without any reserve, he was, in general company, much more silent than one could have wished.

"Have you seen Mr Pinkerton's new "History of the James's "of Scotland?" The author, with whom I was acquainted in London about fifteen years ago, has sent me a copy of it, but my dizzy head will not yet permit me to read it. He is a Scotchman, and

speaks with a strong Edinburgh accent, at least he did so formerly. There are two quartos, with a striking likeness of the author prefixed. He seems to abound too much in our new-fashioned English; but I cannot yet take it upon me to criticise his work."

In the following letter he evinces the same warmth of affection as ever for his friends, by the manner in which he laments the death of Mrs Montagu; although the intelligence he had received of that event proved to be a mistake, as that lady did not die till the year following.

LETTER CCXL.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. DR LAING.

Aberdeen, 7th March, 1799.

"I HAVE just now heard, by the post of this day, a piece of news that affects me very much, the death of my excellent friend Mrs Montagu. Her age was not less than fourscore, so that on this point she is not to be regretted. But many people depended on her; and to me, on all occasions, ever since 1771, when I first became acquainted with her, she has been a faithful and affectionate friend, especially in seasons of distress and difficulty. You will not wonder, then, that her death afflicts me. For some years past a failure in her eyes had made writing very painful to her; but for not less than twenty years she was my punctual correspondent. She was greatly attached to Montagu, who received his name from her, and not less interested in my other son, and in every thing that related to my family. I need not tell you what an excellent writer she was: you must have seen her book on Shakespeare, as compared with the Greek and French dramatic writers. I have known several ladies eminent in literature, but she excelled them all; and in conversation she had more *wit* than any other person, male or female, whom I have ever known. These, however, were

her slighter accomplishments: what was infinitely more to her honour, she was a sincere Christian, both in faith and in practice, and took every proper opportunity to show it; so that by her example and influence she did much good. I knew her husband, who died in extreme old age, in the year 1775; and by her desire had conferences with him on the subject of Christianity; but, to her great concern, he set too much value on mathematical evidences, and piqued himself too much on his knowledge in that science, He took it into his head, too, that I was a mathematician, though I was at a great deal of pains to convince him of the contrary."

Dr Beattie's sufferings were now drawing to a conclusion. In the beginning of April, 1799, he had a stroke of palsy, which for eight days so affected his speech, that he could not make himself understood, and even forgot some of the most material words of every sentence. At different periods after this, he had several returns of the same afflicting malady. The last took place on the 5th October, 1802. It deprived him altogether of the power of motion; and in that humiliating situation, I saw him for the last time in the month of June, 1803.

He continued to languish in this melancholy condition till nine o'clock in the morning of Thursday the 18th of August, 1803, when it pleased the Almighty to remove him from this world to a better, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, without any pain or apparent struggle. For some weeks preceding, his remaining strength had declined rapidly, and his appetite entirely left him; but he seemed not to suffer, and at last he expired as if falling asleep.

His remains were deposited according to his own desire,* beside those of his two sons, in the church-yard of St Nicholas at Aberdeen. The spot is marked by the following elegant and classical inscription, written by his friend the present Dr James Gregory, Professor of the Practice of Physic in the university of Edinburgh:

* See p. 14.; and supra, 187.

Memoriæ. Sacrum.
JACOBI. BEATTIE. LL. D.
Ethices.
In. Academia. Marescallana. hujus. Urbis.
Per. XLIII. Annos.
Professori. Meritissimi.
Viri.
Pietate. Probitate. Ingenio. atque. Doctrina.
Præstantis.
Scriptoris. Elegantissimi. Poetæ. Suavissimi.
Philosophi. Vere. Christiani.
Natus. est. V. Nov. Anno. MDCCXXXV.
Obiit. XVIII. Aug. MDCCCIII.
Omnibus. Liberis. Orbus.
Quorum. Natu. Maximus. JACOBUS. HAY. BEATTIE.
Vel. a. Puerilibus. Annis.
Patrio. Vigent. Ingenio.
Novumque. Decus. Jam. Addens. Paterno.
Suis. Carissimus. Patriæ. Flebilis.
Lenta. Tabe. Consumptus. Periit.
Anno. Ætatis. XXIII.
GEO. ET. MAR. GLENNIE.
H. M. P.

They who have perused, with any degree of attention, the preceding narrative of the life of Dr Beattie, and his letters to his friends, will not require much to be said to give them a sufficient idea of his character.

That he was a poet and philosopher of real and original genius, his writings, in the possession of the public, are the strongest testimonies. The sweetness and harmony of his numbers, the richness of his fancy, and the strictness of moral inculcated in his poetical compositions, are such as will long secure to him a high degree of reputation. His best and most valuable poem is his "Minstrel;" in the delineation of whose character it is generally, and I believe with truth, understood that he depicted his own.

His Essays on "Poetry and Music," on "Memory and Imagination," on "Fable and Romance," "The Theory of Language," and some others, are strongly calculated to give pleasure, as well as instruction, to every enlightened and cultivated understanding; and do equal credit to the elegance of Dr Beattie's taste, and the correctness of his judgment. Eminently skilled in the languages of antiquity, he had formed that taste, and matured that judgment, on the purest models of Greek and Roman literature. He had studied, also, with attention, the most classical compositions in our own language. Nor was he unacquainted with the works of the celebrated authors of France and Italy. His memory was uncommonly strong, and his knowledge of books was extensive; so that to him might, without impropriety, be applied, what Johnson says of his friend Gilbert Walmsley; "His studies "had been so various, that I am not able to name a man of equal "knowledge. His acquaintance with books was great; and what "he did not immediately know, he could at least tell where to find." What Johnson likewise says of his obligations to Walmsley, I may, with equal truth, apply to myself in respect to Dr Beattie; "Such was his amplitude of learning, and such his copiousness of "communication, that it may be doubted, whether a day now pas-"ses in which I have not some advantage from his friendship."*

There were, indeed, few branches of science with which he was not in some degree conversant, except mathematics, and mechanics; for which he used to say, he not only had no turn, but that every application to them brought on his headachs. His chief acquirements were in moral science. In religion, his favourite books, besides the Scriptures and the English Liturgy,† were Butler, Clarke Secker, Porteus. Of the classics, Homer, Horace, Cæsar, and above all, Virgil.

* Johnson's "Lives of the English Poets," Vol. III. p. 36. Life of Smith.

† It is deserving of notice, that although Dr Beattie had been brought up a member of the presbyterian church of Scotland, and regularly attended her worship and ordinances when at Aberdeen, he yet gave the most decided preference to the church of England, generally attending the service of that church when any where from home, and constantly when at Peterhead. He spoke with enthusiasm of the beauty, simplicity, and energy, of the English Liturgy, especially of the Litany, which he declared to be the finest piece of uninspired composition in any language.

His prose-writings were far from being calculated merely to amuse the fancy and delight the imagination; they were admirably fitted to improve and mend the heart. Of his celebrated "Essay "on Truth," which laid the foundation of his fame as an author, an analysis will be found in the Appendix.* In that essay, as has been shown by his correspondence with his philosophical friends, it was his professed aim to combat the fashionable philosophy of the sceptics of his day; and it may be said, I believe with justice, that this work of Dr Beattie's did much towards bringing that philosophy into the discredit in which it is now sunk.

Of his "Evidences of Christianity,"† mention has already been made; and it is perhaps the most popular, as it is certainly among the most useful, of his prose-writings.

As a teacher of ethics, some idea may be formed of his abilities, as well as of his system, from his "Elements of Moral Science," which, it has been seen,‡ he published originally for the use of his pupils, but which may be perused with advantage by every one who wishes to gain some knowledge of the subject, without toiling through elaborate systems of moral philosophy. Those, however, who had the benefit of his tuition, can best tell of his merit as an instructor of youth. Some of them I have heard expatiate with delight, on the unwearied pains he bestowed, not by the mere formal delivery of a lecture, but by the continued course he pursued of examination and repetition, to imprint the precepts of philosophy and religion on the minds of the youth committed to his charge.§ As a professor, not his own class only, but the whole body of students

* Appendix, [Y.] † Supra, p. 187. ‡ Supra, p. 286.

§ I have been enabled to give the following interesting and satisfactory account of his mode of teaching, by two gentlemen who had been his pupils, to whom I applied for that purpose, and who, without any mutual communication, furnished me with the substance of the following detail, nearly in similar words.

The ordinary session, or term of teaching, commences in Marischal College on the first day of November, and ends the first week of April. During that term, the Professor of Moral Philosophy teaches in his class three hours every week-day, viz. at eight o'clock in the morning, at eleven in the forenoon, and at three in the afternoon, except on Tuesdays and Fridays, when there is no teaching in the afternoon. Dr Beattie began his Course of Prelections with "Cicero de Officiis." Of that excellent treatise, he generally made his students carefully read and translate a part every day, at the hour

at the university, looked up to him with esteem and veneration. The profound piety of the public prayers, with which he began the business of each day, arrested the attention of the youngest and most thoughtless: the excellence of his moral character, his gravity blended with cheerfulness, his strictness joined with gentleness, his favour to the virtuous and diligent, and even the mildness of his reproofs to those who were less attentive, rendered him the object of their respect and admiration. Never was more exact discipline preserved than in his class, nor ever any where by more gentle means. His sway was absolute, because it was founded in reason

of meeting in the morning. On the passage then read, the Professor commented at the next hour of meeting, comparing it with the other systems of the ancient Heathen philosophers. He also, from time to time, examined them on the subject of these lectures; and at the end of this introductory course, he dictated to them an abstract of the whole, which they committed to writing in the class.*

He then entered on the study of *Pneumatology*, subdivided into *Psychology* and *Natural Theology*, *Speculative* and *Practical Ethics*, *Economics*, *Jurisprudence*, *Politics*, *Rhetoric*, and *Logic*: of all which branches of philosophy, he, in the same manner, dictated in the morning an abstract; on which, as on a text-book, he commented at his lectures in the forenoon and afternoon, in the clearest, most lively, and most engaging manner; examining his pupils, as he went along, on the attention they had paid to, and the benefit they had derived from, his lectures. At first he was wont to dictate the abstract of his prelections in Latin, from which his pupils, who were tolerable proficients in classical learning, derived much advantage; as they acquired thereby the habit of speaking and writing that language more readily than they had been accustomed to. But as many of his students were far from being masters of Latin, which he himself spoke and wrote with great fluency, he found it necessary to discontinue this practice, and to dictate the abstract of his whole course in English. After the publication of the "Elements of Moral Science," which comprehended the whole of this abstract, it became unnecessary for him to spend, as formerly, one hour each day in dictating notes to his students. He continued, however, in reading the Greek and Latin classics, to make them translate as literally as the genius of the English language would permit; which, in his opinion, was not at all incompatible with that intelligence and taste, wherewith even a philosopher peruses those excellent originals, when he wishes to enter fully into their beauties, and duly to estimate their respective and various merits. The accuracy of this account of Dr Beattie's method of teaching, may be ascertained, by comparing it with the "Elements of Moral Science," or even with that part of the Diary already mentioned, of which a *fac simile* will be found in the Appendix, [E.]

* See supra, p. 287.

and affection. He never employed a harsh epithet in finding fault with any of his pupils; and when, instead of a rebuke, which they were conscious they deserved, they met merely with a mild reproof, it was conveyed in such a manner, as to throw not only the delinquent, but sometimes the whole class, into tears. To gain his favour was the highest ambition of every student; and the gentlest word of disapprobation was a punishment, to avoid which, no exertion was deemed too much.

His great object was not merely to make his pupils philosophers, but to render them good men, pious Christians, loyal to their King, and attached to the British Constitution; pure in morals, happy in the consciousness of a right conduct, and friends to all mankind.

Nor did he confine his care of his students solely to their instruction while they attended his course of lectures. It was his peculiar delight to assist them in finding situations for their future establishment in life; which he had it often in his power to promote, by being frequently applied to by parents and others to procure for them schoolmasters and teachers, whom his knowledge of the genius and abilities of the young men, who had been his pupils, peculiarly enabled him to discover and recommend.*

No stronger proof need be required of the high degree of estimation in which Dr Beattie's talents and virtues were held by men of learning, both at home and abroad, than his having been spontaneously elected an honorary member of the following Societies: "The Zeeland Society of Sciences;"† "The American Philoso- "phical Society at Philadelphia;" "The Literary and Philosophi- "cal Society of Manchester." Dr Beattie was also a Fellow of "The Royal Society of Edinburgh."

The style of his lectures may be judged of by that of the compositions which he has given to the world: and in both cases the

* In perusing the voluminous collection of letters which he had received, it was extremely pleasing to find so great a number from young men in different parts of the world, particularly America and the West Indies, who had attended his lectures; all of them expressing their gratitude for the benefit they had reaped from his tuition, and some of them for the advantageous situations they had obtained through his means.

† The "Essay on Truth," very soon after its publication, had been translated in Holland into the Dutch language.

best quality of it was, that it was the style of a man who spoke and wrote in "simplicity and in earnest."* The language in which he was to write, he studied profoundly. He has himself said, that the qualities at which he chiefly aimed were perspicuity, simplicity, and elegance; and knowing how well these were attainable by the genuine purity of the English language, he was a decided enemy to all innovations in writing, by the introduction of new words and affected phraseology. Of all our English writers, Addison was the author whom he most admired; whose style, therefore, he most carefully studied, and which he adopted as his model in composition. In his earlier writings the effect of this admiration is visible: but afterwards, when success had taught him a little more confidence in his own powers, he seems occasionally to lose sight of his model, and to break forth into a fulness of expression, which reminds us of the force and freedom of the prefaces of Dryden. One undoubted excellence of his style is its variety, its power of expressing whatever he thought or felt, and of communicating to the reader the same thoughts and the same sentiments. On moral subjects, it is grave and manly: on subjects of science and philosophy, it is pure and perspicuous to a degree that has been seldom equalled: but on subjects where his heart or his imagination are interested, it rises to greater richness and elevation, and abounds in those delicate but undefineable touches of fancy and of feeling, which characterise the works of the masters in composition, and which are never attainable by ordinary writers. Yet in thus aiming at simplicity, he was far from losing sight of sublimity of diction, of which many striking instances in his prose-writings will occur to every attentive reader.†

* Bishop Butler's preface to his Sermons.

† I need only instance here, his Reflections on the Contemplation of the Works of Nature;* on National Music;† the Description of the Highlands and Southern Provinces of Scotland;‡ on Personification;§ his Comparison of the Writings and Genius of Dryden and Pope;‖ the Character of Swift;¶ the Discrimination of the Characters of Homer's and Virgil's Heroes;** Strictures on Gray's Ode.†† On reading these, and many similar

* Essay on Poetry and Music, p. 369, 370. 390.
† Ibid. p. 474.
‡ Ibid. p. 479, 480, 481, 482, 483.
§ Ibid. p. 548.
‖ Ibid. p. 368.
¶ Ibid. p. 378, 379.
** Ibid. p. 398—416.
†† Ibid. p. 559.

Throughout the whole course of his life, Dr Beattie was most exemplary in the discharge of the relative duties of a son, a brother, a husband, a father, and a friend. Of his conduct towards his unhappy wife, it is impossible to speak in terms of too high commendation. It has already been mentioned,* that Mrs Beattie had the misfortune to inherit from her mother, that most dreadful of all human ills, a distempered imagination, which, in a very few years after their marriage, showed itself in caprices and folly that, embittered every hour of his life, while he strove at first to conceal her disorder from the world, and, if possible, as he has been heard to say, to conceal it even from himself; till at last from whim, and caprice, and melancholy, it broke out into downright insanity, which rendered her seclusion from society absolutely necessary. During every stage of her illness, he watched and cherished her with the utmost tenderness and care; using every means at first, that medicine could furnish, for her recovery, and afterwards, when her condition was found to be perfectly hopeless, procuring for her every accommodation and comfort that could tend to alleviate her sufferings.† When I reflect on the many sleepless nights and anxious days, which he experienced from Mrs Beattie's malady, and think of the unwearied and unremitting attention he paid to her, during so great a number of years, in that sad situation, his character is exalted in my mind to a degree which may be equalled, but I am sure never can be excelled, and makes the fame of the poet and the philosopher fade from my remembrance.

The strictness and regularity of Dr Beattie's piety was shown, not merely by a regular attendance, while his health permitted, on

passages in his works, I have been often disposed to apply to him the exquisite praise which Cowley bestows on a much inferior writer:

> "His candid style like a clear stream does flow;
> "And his bright fancy all the way
> "Does, like the sunshine, on it play."
>
> COWLEY'S *Ode on the Royal Society.*

* See p. 74.

† Of this last part of Dr Beattie's conduct, I am fully able to speak from my own personal knowledge; as, during several years, I had the sole charge of her and her concerns, while she resided at no great distance from Edinburgh. She still survives him in the same melancholy condition.

the public ordinances of religion, but by the more certain and unequivocal testimony of private devotion. I have been informed by his niece, Mrs Glennie, that after he had retired at night to his chamber, she frequently overheard his voice rendered audible in the ardour of prayer. And she has also told me, that even throughout the day, when she knew his spirits to be more than usually depressed, while he thought himself alone, she could occasionally perceive that he was offering up his orisons to Heaven with the utmost fervour. His pious resignation to the Divine Will, under some of the hardest trials that "flesh is heir to," was indeed but too severely proved during the greatest part of his life; but it is consoling to know, that it was not tried in vain.

Great tenderness of heart, and the keenest sensibility of soul, qualities very frequently the concomitants of genius, were eminently conspicuous in the character of Dr Beattie. They rendered him "tremblingly alive" to the sorrows and the sufferings of others, and produced in him the warmest emotions of friendship, with an earnest desire to perform every service in his power to all within his reach.

It must not be dissembled at the same time, that Dr Beattie was not altogether free from prejudices: But they were most commonly prejudices of an amiable kind. He loved virtue wherever he found it; and as he had the happiness of numbering among his friends some of the best and most accomplished characters of the age in which he lived, he returned their kindness with ardour and enthusiasm. If there was an affection of his nature more strong than any other, it was that of gratitude. To those, therefore, who had spontaneously undertaken to promote his interest, he thought he never could declare too strongly the sense he entertained of their kindness. This sentiment, which on every occasion he proclaimed so loudly, he did not confine to mere expressions of gratitude for favours conferred on him: it led him to form a judgment even of their writings, if they were literary characters, which could not but be considered as sometimes a good deal exaggerated. In the same manner, instances might be produced, where he had carried antipathies to particular persons, and to their writings, somewhat beyond the measure of due discretion. In both cases, however, it was very readily allowed, that he never uttered a sylla-

ble, either of commendation or dislike, which he himself did not believe to be perfectly well-founded.

It is a curious circumstance, that although when at school and college he had been admired and loved by his companions for his mild and gentle disposition, it was remarked by his most intimate friends, at a more advanced period of life, that he had become not a little irritable by a continued application to metaphysical controversy. This habit, however respected authors rather than men; and as it gave little or no disturbance to those around him, was easily overlooked by his friends, in the multitude of his amiable qualities, and was often rather a subject of pleasantry to them than otherwise.

In his disposition he was humane and charitable. And it has been told of him by his family, that no suppliant, to his knowledge, ever went from his door unsatisfied.

I have already remarked, that he was a passionate admirer of the beauties of nature; delighting to walk out into the fields, sometimes in the company of a friend, but more frequently by himself, either when oppressed by those violent headachs, to which he had been subject from his youth, or when struggling under the weight of domestic affliction. In those solitary walks it was, that he was wont to indulge in silent and profound meditation on the studies in which he was engaged. In committing his thoughts to paper, afterwards, he was laborious in the extreme; very rarely making use of an amanuensis, but constantly and repeatedly transcribing his works in his correct, neat, and beautiful hand-writing.

Dr Beattie was fond of society; and while Mrs Beattie's health permitted her to appear, he saw a good deal of company, and much enjoyed the pleasure of having his friends with him at his table, chiefly at dinner, except when he had musical parties at night. But he had a great dislike to cards, which, however, he expressed in the gentlest manner, by saying with much good humour, that he never had capacity sufficient to learn any game. To chess he had a real aversion, as occasioning, in his opinion, a great waste of time, and requiring an useless application of thought.

His conversation on moral and literary subjects was in the highest degree instructive and entertaining; and so much was his

company valued and sought after, that in his best days, he was not able to comply with half the invitations he received from persons eminent for their rank, character, and learning. In the midst of a select party of his private friends, and in his little domestic circle, he was uncommonly cheerful, animated, and pleasant; indulging himself in frequent sallies of playful but innocent mirth. He was even fond of the amusement of a pun; in which, however, it must be confessed, he was not always very successful. He wished, indeed, to be thought to possess a certain degree of wit and humour, especially when in company with some of our mutual friends, such as Major Mercer and Mr Arbuthnot, who were endowed with more of these qualities than almost any men I ever knew; but in which Dr Beattie followed them "*haud passibus æquis.*"

His mornings, during the winter season of the university, were chiefly employed in attendance on his class, and in taking the exercise necessary for his health, sometimes on horseback, but more frequently on foot, for he took particular delight in walking. The evening, when not engaged with company, was his time for serious study: but after supper, he dedicated his hours to the amusement of his family, by reading aloud such books of entertainment as came occasionally in his way, or in social conversation; and to the young people around him he was always exceedingly indulgent. During the summer, as he was not engaged with the business of the college, he could afford to devote more of his hours to study, yet still he dedicated a considerable portion of his time to exercise and to the society of his friends. As an exercise, he was fond of archery, and used it long enough to arrive at some dexterity in the practice, until he grew so corpulent that it fatigued him, and this obliged him to lay it aside.

Although Dr Beattie's acquaintance in early life had been of the humblest sort, and even after his removal from the parochial school of Fordoun to Aberdeen, had been of a rank very inferior to that in which he came afterwards to be introduced, yet he showed no awkwardness of behaviour in the most exalted and polished circles. And it must be recorded to his praise, that notwithstanding he had been caressed by the great and the learned in England, in a degree beyond most authors of his day, he returned to his native country unspoiled by prosperity, and as humble and unassuming in his manners as he had left it.

To a very correct and refined taste in judging of poetry, painting, and music, he added the rare accomplishment of some actual practice in each. Of his skill in poetical composition, enough has been already said. Of music, he was remarkably fond. He loved all kinds of good music, but especially that of the old school, and the simple but enchanting melodies of our own country. His favorite masters were Corelli, Handel, Purcel, Pergolese, Geminiani, Avison, Jackson. He not only understood the theory of music, but he occasionally amused himself by composing basses and second parts to some of his favourite airs. He was delighted with the organ, on which he often played simple harmonies; and he performed with taste and expression on the violoncello. He sung a little; but his voice was loud, and deficient in mellowness. In his best days, he was a regular attendant, and an useful director of the weekly concert at Aberdeen, where he was generally at the same time a performer on the violoncello.* In the other sister art of painting, he excelled in drawing grotesque figures and caricatures of striking resemblance; although in this last talent, he very sparingly indulged himself, and at an early period of life laid it entirely aside. Once in company with a few friends, he drew three or four of these for our amusement, as we sat at table, which I carried away with me, by his permission; and I presume they are the only specimens of his excellence in that species of design now existing. I believe I may say, that although I have known many who could practise two of the sister arts variously combined, such as poetry and music, or painting and poetry, Dr Beattie is the sole instance of my own acquaintance, at least, of a person who possessed the happy talent of being able to practise, with some success, in all the three.

It has been sometimes said, I believe, that Dr Beattie, in the latter part of his life, indulged rather too much in the use of wine. In one of his letters, he intimates, that he found it necessary as a

* His musical entertainment was once unluckily suspended, by his accidentally cutting the tendon of the middle finger of the left-hand, so necessary in the use of that instrument. But in time he arrived at the dexterity of performing all the stops, readily and accurately, with the three remaining fingers. Although he ceased to perform any longer in public, he continued to amuse himself and his friends in private as before, until after the death of his sons.

medicine. "My health," says he, (writing to Mr. Arbuthnot) "for these ten days past, has been declining very fast. With the "present pressure upon my mind, I should not be able to sleep, if "I did not use wine as an opiate. It is less hurtful than laudanum, "but not so effectual." Wine used for this sad purpose, might sometimes possibly exceed its due limits. Had this really been the case, who would be much surprised, when it is considered, that, in the decline of his life, almost every day was embittered by the unfortunate derangement of his wife, by the loss of both his sons, by his own increasing maladies of body, and the deepening depression of his mind? Who would wonder, (though every one would lament) if, under such extraordinary circumstances, recourse should sometimes be had to the cordial powers of wine to blunt the edge of pain, and deaden the sense of sufferings, too acute to be borne? Over failings arising from such sources as these, (even if they had been real) the hand of pity and charity would draw the veil of silence and oblivion: Yet I must solemnly declare, that although I have often seen him in the hours both of melancholy and gaiety, and although he has occasionally resided at our house for weeks together, I never once saw him disposed to any excess of this kind.

In his person, Dr Beattie was of the middle size, though not elegantly, yet not awkwardly formed, but with something of a slouch in his gait. His eyes were black and piercing, with an expression of sensibility, somewhat bordering on melancholy, except when engaged in cheerful and social intercourse with his friends, when they were exceedingly animated. As he advanced in years, and became incapable of taking his usual degree of exercise, he grew corpulent and unwieldly, till within a few months of his death, when he had greatly decreased in size. When I last saw him, the diminution of his form was but too prophetic of the event that soon followed.

Here I close my account of the Life of Dr Beattie; throughout the whole of which I am not conscious of having, in any respect, misrepresented either his actions or his character; and of whom to record the truth is his best praise.

On thus reviewing the long period of forty years that have elapsed since the commencement of our intimacy, it is impossible for me not to be deeply affected, by the reflection, that of the numerous friends with whom he and I were wont to associate, at the period of our earliest acquaintance, all, I think except three, have already paid their debt to nature; and that in no long time (how soon is known only to HIM, the great Disposer of all events) my gray-hairs shall sink into the grave, and I also shall be numbered with those who have been. May a situation so awful make its due impression on my mind! and may it be my earnest endeavour to employ that short portion of life which yet remains to me, in such a manner, as that when that last dread hour shall come, in which my soul shall be required of me, I may look forward with trembling hope to a happy immortality, through the merits and mediation of our ever-blessed Redeemer!

APPENDIX.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

Note [A.] p. 12.

IT was once my intention to have inserted here the diary Dr Beattie had kept of his perusal of Homer, in which he had scrupulously marked the number of days he had bestowed on each book. But on farther reflection, I have chosen to omit the diary, as this exertion of study does not seem to exceed what any young man, with no very extraordinary degree of application, may accomplish; and, as the work has swelled in bulk much beyond my original expectation, I am unwilling to add to it by the insertion of what is unnecessary. I may just add, however, that he has been often heard to say, that it was this first careful perusal of Homer, that gave him a just conception of the true nature of epic poetry. How beautifully and correctly he has expressed his ideas of the Epopeé in his "Essay on Poetry," is known to every reader of taste. He has concluded his diary with the following apposite quotation:

> "Qui cupit optatam cursu contingere metam,
> "Multa tulit fecitque puer."
>
> HORAT.

Note [B.] p. 16.

There have, no doubt, been many extraordinary and well-attested instances of somnambulism;* and an anecdote of the late Dr Blacklock is not less remarkable than any other to be met with. It is mentioned in Dr Cleghorn's thesis, "De Somno," as having happened at the inn at Kirkcudbright in Scotland, and authenticated by the testimony of Mrs Blacklock, who is still alive, and was present with a numerous company of his friends, who dined with him that day. But as it is already in print,† I am unwilling to swell this Appendix by inserting it here.

* "Encyclopædia Britannica," Vol. XVII. p. 534.

† See Anderson's "Poets of Great Britain," Vol. II. p. 1154. Life of Blacklock.

Note [C.] p. 20,

Copy of the last Will and Testament of JAMES BEATTIE, LL. D. *written by his own Hand, and dated 20th July*, 1799.

I James Beattie, Doctor of Laws, Professor of Moral Philosophy and Logic in Marischal College, Aberdeen, willing to prevent all dispute and litigation about the property I may leave behind me at death; and being at present, by the goodness of God, in soundness of mind, and in my usual bodily health, do make my last will and testament as follows: To the persons after mentioned as the executors of this my will, namely, to Sir William Forbes, Baronet, of Pitsligo; to Robert Arbuthnot, Esq. secretary to the Trustees, &c. in Edinburgh; to Major James Mercer, formerly of the forty-ninth regiment; and to James Farquhar Gordon, Esq. writer to the signet, I bequeath in trust, after payment of all my just debts, to be lent or laid out by them, on sufficient heritable security, the sum of ***** pounds sterling; and I appoint the legal interest thereof to be applied yearly by them for the use and behoof of my wife, Mary Dun; and this to continue all the days of her life; hoping that this provision, with ***** pounds sterling, a-year, to which she will be entitled from the Widows Fund,* will be fully sufficient for her comfortable support: To my niece, Margaret Valentine, wife of Mr. Professor Glennie of Marischal College, Aberdeen, I bequeath ****** pounds sterling; and to her the said Margaret Valentine, to whom I and my children, while I had children, were under great obligations, I also bequeath all my household furniture, and all my books and other moveables, except few books and moveables after mentioned, which I leave as memorials of me to other friends; to her also the said Margaret Valentine, I bequeath my picture by my dear friend, Sir Joshua Reynolds, deceased, who made me a present of it, of which picture I know she will be particularly careful, from her regard to me, and on account of the great merit of the work: To my excellent friend, Sir William Forbes, Baronet, of Pitsligo, I bequeath, as a small memorial of our friendship, my silver watch, with a stop and second hand, made with particular care by Gartly, and also the two splendid volumes in quarto of Lavater's "Physiognomy," which will be found among my other books: To my dear friend, Robert Arbuthnot, Esq. secretary to the Trustees, &c. in Edinburgh, I bequeath my gold-headed cane, which I received as a present from the late William, Lord Newhaven, and also my gold ring with the King's head by Tassie, which ring I had the honour to receive from George, Lord Onslow: To the Rev. Dr William Laing in Peterhead, to whom as a friend and as a physician I have often been obliged, I bequeath all my music books, together with ***** pounds sterling, and the telescope which he made for me: and to Miss Beattie Laing, his second daughter, I bequeath the organ which was built by my

* A fund established by act of Parliament, for the payment of annuities to the widows of the clergy of the church of Scotland, and the widows of the professors of the universities in that part of the united kingdom. An excellent institution!

deceased son, James Hay Beattie, and which is now, and for some time past has been, in the dwelling-house of the said Dr Laing: To my brother, David Beattie, I bequeath ***** pounds sterling; and I desire that my bond, accepted by him for ******* pounds sterling, which I lent him, and on which more than thirteen years interests are now due, may be cancelled and sent to him: To my sister's son, James Dewars or Duers, I bequeath ***** pounds sterling: I beg, my dear friend, James Mercer, Esq. formerly Major of the forty-ninth regiment, will accept of my Olivet's Cicero in nine volumes quarto, and of my Clarke's Homer in two volumes quarto, as a small acknowledgment of the pleasure and improvement, which for almost forty years I have derived from his conversation and friendship: To the Poors Hospital of Aberdeen, I bequeath ****** pounds sterling; and to the Lunatic Hospital of Aberdeen, I bequeath the same sum of ****** pounds. And after paying these several legacies, I order and appoint, that what may remain of my property may be equally divided between my said niece, Margaret Valentine, and her brother, David Valentine, Lieutenant in the Royal Navy; recommending it to them to give such pecuniary assistance as they may judge reasonable to my brother David Beattie's children. And this I declare to be my last will and testament. And I appoint and nominate the said Sir William Forbes, Baronet, of Pitsligo, the said Robert Arbuthnot, Esq. the said Major James Mercer, and the said James Farquhar Gordon, Esq. jointly, or any two of them accepting and surviving, to be the executors of this my last will and testament, bequeathing to each of these executors the sum of **** pounds sterling, as a small acknowledgment for their trouble in executing this my said will: Reserving to myself the privilege of making at any time, by a codicil or codicils annexed, or in any other way I may think proper, such alterations in, or additions to, this my will, as may to me appear reasonable. In witness whereof, these presents, written with my own hand on this and the preceding page, are subscribed by me at Aberdeen, the twentieth day of July, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-nine years, before these witnesses, John Arthur, sacrist of Marischal College, and George Pirie, porter of Marischal College.

(Signed) J. Beattie.

(Signed) John Arthur, witness.
George Pirie, witness.

Note [D.] p. 21.

James, the fourteenth Earl of Erroll, was the eldest son of William the unfortunate Earl of Kilmarnock, (who lost his head on Tower-Hill, 18th August, 1746,) by Lady Anne Livingston, only child and heiress of James, Earl of Linlithgow and Callander, by Lady Margaret Hay, second daughter of John, twelfth Earl of Erroll; on the death of whose Eldest sister, Mary, Countess of Erroll in her own right, in the year 1758, her grand-nephew, known at that time by the title of Lord Boyd, as eldest son of Lord Kilmarnock, succeeded to the earldom and estate of Erroll, thus uniting in his

person the four earldoms of Erroll, Kilmarnock, Linlithgow, and Callander,* as well as the ancient dignity of Lord High Constable of Scotland, which had been long enjoyed by the Earls of Erroll, and had been reserved to them by the Articles of Union of the two kingdoms, as well as by the act of Parliament abolishing the heritable jurisdictions of Scotland in the year 1749.

I cannot better delineate the character of this amiable and accomplished nobleman, than by the following extract of a letter from Dr Beattie to Mrs Montagu, giving her an account of Lord Erroll's death, which happened the 3d June, 1778, in the fifty-second year of his age.

"Lord Erroll's death, of which you must have heard, is a great loss to this "country, and matter of unspeakable regret to his friends. I owed him "much: but, independently on all considerations of gratitude, I had a sin- "cere liking and very great esteem for him. In his manners he was wonder- "fully agreeable, a most affectionate and attentive parent, husband, and "brother, elegant in his economy, and perhaps expensive, yet exact and me- "thodical. He exerted his influence as a man of rank and a magistrate in "doing good to all the neighbourhood; and it has often been mentioned to "his honour, that no man ever administered an oath with a more pious and "commanding solemnity than he. He was regular in his attendance upon "public worship, and exemplary in the performance of it. In a word, "he was adored by his servants, a blessing to his tenants, and the darling "of the whole country. His stature was six feet four inches, and his pro- "portions most exact. His countenance and deportment exhibited such a "mixture of the sublime and the graceful, as I have never seen united in "any other man. He often put me in mind of an ancient hero; and I re- "member Dr Samuel Johnson was positive, that he resembled Homer's "character of Sarpedon."

To the truth of every part of this account by Dr Beattie, of the late Lord Erroll, I can bear ample testimony; as I had the happiness of his Lordship's acquaintance, and was honoured with his friendship, of which he gave me a strong proof, by appointing me one of the guardians of his children. I may add, that were I desired to specify the man of the most graceful form, the most elegant, polished, and popular manners, whom I have ever known in my long intercourse with society, I should not hesitate to name James, Earl of Erroll. At the coronation of his present Majesty, Lord Erroll officiated as Lord High Constable of Scotland.

Note [E.] p. 22.

The diary, as I have it, commences on the 6th January, 1762, on the re-assembling of his class after the Christmas holidays: but as it refers on the top of the page to a former diary of the preceding part of that session, it had most probably comprehended the whole period of his lectures

* The three last had been attainted in the persons of the Earl of Linlithgow and Callander on the year 1716, and of the Earl of Kilmarnock in the year 1746: But had those attainders not taken place, the right of succession to those dignities centered in Lord Erroll.

from their commencement. It is written with uncommon neatness, and even elegance of penmanship, to which he was always extremely attentive, in the form of a kalendar, and continued without interruption to he 2d April, when the winter-session of the year 1792-3 was closed with the usual graduation of masters of arts. When the delicate state of his health is considered, shattered as it was by intense application to study in the composition of his various works, it must appear wonderful, that he was able to deliver his lectures from year to year, with so little interruption from indisposition.

Note, [F*.] p. 26.

I am indebted for this account of the Philosophical Society of Aberdeen, not only to their manuscript records, now in my possession, but to the Life of Dr Gregory, prefixed to his works, p. 37. This elegant account of the late Dr Gregory is anonymous. But it is well known to be written by my friend the Honourable Alexander Fraser Tytler, Lord Woodhouselee, one of the Judges of the Supreme Civil Court of Law of Scotland, to whom the public is also indebted for a valuable and truly original "Essay on the Prin-"ciples of Translation;" as well as for an excellent critique on the poetical works of our Scottish "Theocritus," Allan Ramsay: although to neither of these classical performances has his modesty suffered him to prefix his name. He has also published. "Elements of General History, Ancient and "Modern;" a performance of much merit, of which he has acknowledged himself to be the author, as it contains the outlines of a course of public lectures, delivered by him in the university of Edinburgh, in which he was Professor of universal history, before he was raised to the Bench. Lord Woodhouselee was also one of the elegant writers to whom we are indebted for those two excellent periodical works, the "Mirror" and "Lounger," published at Edinburgh.*

Some account of the Philosophical Society of Aberdeen, will likewise be found in the Supplement to the "Encyclopedia Britannica," Vol. I. p. 699. article, *Life of Dr Gerard.*

Note [F.] p. 34.

This and the three following notes were meant for the preservation of some pieces of Dr Beattie's poetry, published in the two first editions of his poems, though omitted in his later editions; but which I had thought it a pity should be lost. But on farther reflection, it has been judged expedient to retain only the "Ode to Peace," of which two stanzas are already inserted in the text, at p. 50. and which appears to be of superior beauty. The Epitaph on himself is also preserved, for the reason assigned in the text. The reader will therefore be pleased to pardon the inaccuracy of the references here.

* This Letter of reference is by mistake repeated. † See Note [DD.]

The concluding lines of the "Hares" are inserted here, as mentioned in the text, p. 34. note [F.]; because it is not meant to print the fable itself in the projected new edition of his "Works in Prose and Verse."

"Now from the western mountain's brow,
"Compassed with clouds of various glow,
"The sun a broader orb displays,
"And shoots aslope his ruddy rays.
"The lawn assumes a fresher green,
"And dew-drops spangle all the scene,
"The balmy zephyr breathes along,
"The shepherd sings his tender song;
"With all their lays the groves resound
"And falling waters murmur round.
"Discord and Care were put to flight,
"And all was peace and calm delight."

Note [G.] p. 36.

ODE TO PEACE.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1758.

I. 1.

PEACE, heaven-descended maid! whose powerful voice
From ancient darkness called the morn;
And hushed of jarring elements the noise,
When Chaos, from his old dominion torn,
With all his bellowing throng,
Far, far was hurled the void abyss along;
And all the bright angelic choir,
Striking, through all their ranks, the eternal lyre,
Poured, in loud symphony, the impetuous strain;
And every fiery orb and planet sung,
And wide, through night's dark solitary reign,
Rebounding long and deep, the lays triumphant rung!

I. 2.

Oh, whither art thou fled, Saturnian Age!
Roll round again, majestic years!
To break the sceptre of tyrannic rage;
From Woe's wan cheek to wipe the bitter tears;
Ye years, again roll round!
Hark! from afar what desolating sound,
While echoes load the sighing gales,
With dire presage the throbbing heart assails!
Murder, deep-roused, with all the whirlwind's haste,
And roar of tempest, from her cavern springs,

Her tangled serpents girds around her waist,
Smiles ghastly fierce, and shakes her gore-distilling wings.

I. 3.

The shouts, redoubling, rise
In thunder to the skies;
The nymphs, disordered, dart along,
Sweet powers of solitude and song,
Stunned with the horrors of discordant sound;
And all is listening, trembling round.
Torrents, far heard amid the waste of night,
That oft have led the wanderer right,
Are silent at the noise.
The mighty Ocean's more majestic voice,
Drowned in superior din, is heard no more;
The surge in silence seems to sweep the foamy shore.

II. 1.

The bloody banner, streaming in the air,
Seen on yon sky-mixt mountain's brow,
The mingling multitudes, the maddning car,
Driven in confusion to the plain below,
War's dreadful lord proclaim.
Bursts out, by frequent fits, the expansive flame;
Snatched in tempestuous eddies, flies
The surging smoke o'er all the darkened skies;
The cheerful face of heaven no more is seen;
The bloom of morning fades to deadly pale:
The bat flies transient o'er the dusky green,
And night's foul birds along the sullen twilight sail.

II. 2.

Involved in fire-streaked gloom, the car comes on.
The rushing steeds grim Terror guides.
His forehead writhed to a relentless frown,
Aloft the angry power of battle rides.
Grasped in his mighty hand
A mace tremendous desolates the land;
The tower rolls headlong down the steep,
The mountain shrinks before its wasteful sweep.
Chill horror the dissolving limbs invades,
Smit by the blasting lightning of his eyes;
A deeper gloom invests the howling shades;
Stripped is the shattered grove, and every verdure dies.

II. 3.

How startled Phrensy stares,
Bristling her ragged hairs!
Revenge the gory fragment gnaws;
See, with her griping vulture-claws
Imprinted deep, she rends the mangled wound!
Hate whirls her torch sulphureous round.
The shrieks of agony, and clang of arms,
Re-echo to the hoarse alarms,
Her trump terrific blows.
Disparting from behind, the clouds disclose,
Of kingly gesture, a gigantic form,
That with his scourge sublime rules the careering storm.

III. 1.

Ambition, outside fair! within as foul
As fiends of fiercest heart below,
Who ride the hurricanes of fire, that roll
Their thundering vortex o'er the realms of woe,
Yon naked waste survey;
Where late was heard the flute's mellifluous lay;
Where late the rosy-bosomed hours,
In loose array, danced lightly o'er the flowers;
Where late the shepherd told his tender tale;
And, wakened by the murmuring breeze of morn,
The voice of cheerful labour filled the dale;
And dove-eyed Plenty smiled, and waved her liberal horn.

III. 2.

Yon ruins, sable from the wasting flame,
But mark the once resplendent dome;
The frequent corse obstructs the sullen stream,
And ghosts glare horrid from the sylvan gloom.
How sadly silent all!
Save where outstretched beneath yon hanging wall,
Pale Famine moans with feeble breath,
And Anguish yells, and grinds his bloody teeth.
Though vain the muse, and every melting lay,
To touch thy heart, unconscious of remorse!
Know, monster, know, thy hour is on the way;
I see, I see the years begin their mighty course.

III. 3.

What scenes of glory rise
Before my dazzled eyes!
Young zephyrs wave their wanton wings,
And melody celestial rings.

All blooming on the lawn the nymphs advance,
And touch the lute, and range the dance:
And the blithe shepherds, on the mountain's side,
Arrayed in all their rural pride,
Exalt the festive note,
Inviting Echo from her inmost grot——
But ah! the landscape glows with fainter light;
It darkens, swims, and flies for ever from my sight.

IV. 1.

Illusions vain! Can sacred PEACE reside
Where sordid gold the breast alarms,
Where cruelty inflames the eye of pride,
And grandeur wantons in soft pleasures arms?
Ambition, these are thine!
These from the soul erase the form divine;
And quench the animating fire,
That warms the bosom with sublime desire,
Thence the relentless heart forgets to feel,
And hatred triumphs on the o'erwhelming brow,
And midnight Rancour grasps the cruel steel,
Blaze the blue flames of death, and sound the shrieks of woe.

IV. 2.

From Albion fled, thy once beloved retreat,
What regions brighten in thy smile,
Creative PEACE! and underneath thy feet
See sudden flowers adorn the rugged soil?
In bleak Siberia blows,
Waked by thy genial breath, the balmy rose?
Waved over by thy magic wand,
Does life inform fell Lybia's burning sand?
Or does some isle thy parting flight detain,
Where roves the Indian through primæval shades;
Haunts the pure pleasures of the sylvan reign,
And, led by Reason's light, the path of nature treads?

IV. 3.

On Cuba's utmost steep,*
Far leaning o'er the deep,
The Goddess' pensive form was seen.
Her robe, of Nature's varied green,
Waved on the gale; grief dimmed her radiant eyes,

* This alluded to the discovery of America by the Spaniards under Columbus. Those ravagers are said to have made their first descent on the islands in the Gulf of Florida, of which Cuba is one

Her bosom heaved with boding sighs.
She eyed the main; where, gaining on the view,
Emerging from the ethereal blue,
Midst the dread pomp of war,
Blazed the Iberian streamer from afar.
She saw; and, on refulgent pinions borne,
Slow winged her way sublime, and mingled with the morn.

From p. 36.*

EPITAPH ON **** *******

ESCAPED the gloom of mortal life, a soul
Here leaves its mouldering tenement of clay,
Safe, where no cares their whelming billows roll,
No doubts bewilder, and no hopes betray.

Like thee, I once have stemmed the sea of life;
Like thee, have languished after empty joys;
Like thee, have laboured in the stormy strife;
Been grieved for trifles, and amused with toys.

Yet for a while 'gainst Passion's threatful blast
Let steady Reason urge the struggling oar;
Shot through the dreary gloom, the morn at last
Gives to thy longing eye the blissful shore.

Forget my frailties, thou art also frail;
Forgive my lapses, for thyself may'st fall;
Nor read, unmoved, my artless tender tale,—
I was a friend, O man, to thee, to all.

In perusing this beautiful Epitaph, the reader will be in some places reminded of Gray's "Elegy in a Country Church-yard." Whether Beattie had that poem in his eye while he was writing, cannot with any certainty be discovered. Gray's "Elegy in a Country Church-yard," was first published, in a quarto sixpenny pamphlet, by Dodsley, in 1750; it was afterwards published, along with some other of Mr Gray's poems, in 1753; whereas this Elegy of Dr Beattie's was first printed in the "Scots Magazine" only in 1757. It is, therefore, possible, that Dr Beattie may have seen the Elegy of Gray before he wrote his own. But when his obscurity at that time is considered, and the little access he had to books, it is, I think, much more probable, that it had never come within his view. It is, however, of no consequence; for any coincidence of thought between the two, is merely a proof, how much one man of genius may imitate another, without servilely copying him.

* *N. B.* The letter of reference accidentally omitted.

Note [K.] p. 37.

I am indebted to my friend, Lord Woodhouselee, whose classical taste in every branch of polite literature, especially on the subject of "Transla-"tion," is justly entitled to high commendation, for an excellent paper of critical observations on the translations of the "Bucolics of Virgil," by Dryden, Warton, and Beattie; and I confess I was agreeably surprised to find the result so favourable to Beattie, who, soon after his translations were published, declared, that he was ashamed of them, and wished them to be for ever consigned to oblivion. We do not hear that either Dryden or Warton thought so meanly of their translations, though the former was one of the best of the English poets, and the latter possessed of poetical genius and a refined critical taste.

LORD WOODHOUSELEE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Edinburgh, 10th January, 1804.

"AS you expressed a wish to have my opinion of the comparative merits of the three translations of the "Eclogues of Virgil," by Dryden, Warton, and Beattie, it has been a very pleasing amusement to me in a few leisure holiday-hours, to make this comparison; and I now sit down to comply with your request. In matters of this sort, general approbation or censure is of little value. On the other hand, we risk being tedious, if we go too much into particulars. I shall endeavour, if I can, to avoid both extremes.

"Of the three rival translations, I think Dr Warton's the most faithful to the sense of the original, the least faulty, and in general, though not always, the most poetical.

"Dryden, in the usual licentiousness of his translations, while he frequently loads his original with his own supposed embellishments, more frequently impairs the sense by the omission of material ideas. Thus in Eclogue first, the beautiful apostrophe,

"*Fortunate senex, hîc, inter flumina nota,*
"*Et fontes sacros, frigus captabis opacum,*"

is left out altogether. Warton gives it faithfully,

"Happy old man! here, midst the customed streams,
"And sacred springs, you'll shun the scorching beams."

Beattie, with more beauty of poetry, but less fidelity, as he omits the expressive repetition of *fortunate senex*,

"You, by known streams and sacred fountains laid,
"Shall taste the coolness of the sacred shade."

"In the finest passage of the same Eclogue, Dryden is extremely poor:

"*En unquam patrios longo post tempore fines,*
"*Pauperis et tugurî congestum cespite culmen,*
"*Post aliquot, mea regna videns, mirabor aristas!*
"*Impius hæc tam culta novalia miles habebit?*
"*Barbarus has segetes? En quò discordia cives*
"*Perduxit miseros! En quîs consevimus agros!*"

" O must the wretched exiles ever mourn,
" Nor after length of rolling years return!
" Are we condemned by Fate's unjust decree
" No more our houses and our homes to see!
" Or shall we mount again the rural throne,
" And rule the country kingdoms all our own?
" Did we for these barbarians plant and sow?
" On these, on these our happy fields bestow?
" Good heaven! what dire effects from civil discord flow!"

DRYDEN.

Nor does Beattie's version of this passage deserve much praise:

" When long, long years have tedious rolled away,
" Ah! shall I yet at last, at last survey
" My dear paternal lands, and dear abode,
" Where once I reigned in walls of humble sod!
" These lands, these harvests must the soldier share:
" For rude barbarians lavish we our care!
" How are our fields become the spoil of wars!
" How are we ruined by intestine jars!"

It is much better rendered by Warton; though still with inferior beauty to the original:

" Ah! shall I never once again behold,
" When many a year in tedious round has rolled,
" My native seats? Ah, ne'er with ravished thought
" Gaze on my little realm, and turf-built cot?
" What! must these rising crops barbarians share?
" These well-tilled fields become the spoils of war?
" See, to what misery Discord drives the swain!
" See for what lords we spread the teeming grain!"

Ibid.

" *Hîc illum vidi juvenem, &c.*
" *Pascite ut ante boves, pueri,*" *&c.*
" There first the youth of heavenly birth I viewed,
" For whom our monthly victims are renewed;
" He heard my vows, and graciously decreed
" My grounds to be restored, my former flocks to feed."

DRYDEN.

It is evident that a beauty is here lost, by the omission of the apostrophe in the close.

" 'Twas there these eyes the heaven-born youth beheld,
" For whom our altars monthly incense yield:
" My suit he even prevented, while he spoke,—
" Manure your ancient farm, and feed your former flock!"

BEATTIE.

This were well, but for the omission of the courteous appellative *pueri*, which is a characteristic stroke. "My suit he even prevented," is a very happy turn. Dr Warton is more correct, but with less beauty of poetry:

"There I that youth beheld, for whom shall rise
"Each year my votive incense to the skies;
"'Twas there this gracious answer blessed mine ear,—
"Swains, feed again your flocks, and yoke your steers!"

WARTON.

"In the second Eclogue,

"*At mecum raucis, tua dum vestigia lustro,*
"*Sole sub ardenti resonant arbusta cicadis.*"

Dryden debases this passage of simple description by a ludicrous conceit:

"While, in the scorching sun, I trace in vain
"Thy flying footsteps o'er the burning plain,
"The creaking locusts with my voice conspire;
"They fried with heat, and I with fierce desire."

DRYDEN.

Warton injures it, by an absurd attempt to give it dignity:

"Thee, while I follow o'er the burning plains,
"And join the shrill *Cicada's* plaintive strains."

WARTON.

Beattie has succeeded without any effort, by the justness of his taste:

"And all is still; save where the buzzing sound
"Of chirping grashoppers is heard around:
"While I, exposed to all the rage of heat,
"Wander the wilds in search of thy retreat."

BEATTIE.

"It required much judgment to avoid indelicacy of expression, and at the same time to convey the full sense, in some passages of the third Eclogue: as,

"*Parcius ista viris——*
"*Novimus et qui te,*" &c.

Here Dryden is most offensive and disgusting: Beattie is too plain: Warton is more delicate, and not less faithful to the original.

Ibid.

"*De grege non ausim quicquam deponere tecum:*
"*Est mihi namque domi pater, est injusta noverca.*"

Warton and Beattie saw nothing scurrilous in this passage; but Dryden delighted to make it so:

"You know too well I feed my father's flock;
"What can I wager from the common stock?
"A step-dame too I have, a cursed she,
"Who rules my hen-pecked sire, and orders me."

Ibid.

"——*Conon, et quis fuit alter,*" &c.

Warton has missed this fine stroke of rustic simplicity; Dryden and Beattie have both done it justice.

"The fourth Eclogue, *Pollio*, of a different strain from all the rest, is, in my opinion, better translated by Beattie than by either of his rival poets. Dryden, whose genius could have done the most ample justice to the subject, has failed, in some instances, from a bad taste, but in more from carelessness. He had a strange fancy for giving variety to the heroic measure by a sort of double Alexandrine:

"—Majestic months set out with him to their appointed race—
"—Another Argos land the chiefs upon the Iberian shore—
"—And joyful ages from behind in crowding ranks appear"—

This measure is extremely harsh and unmusical, and gives a burlesque air, instead of dignity.

"The beautiful passage in the close of this Eclogue,

"*Incipe, parve puer, risu cognoscere matrem;*
"*Matri longa decem tulerunt fastidia menses:*"

is thus debased:

"Begin, auspicious, boy, to cast about
"Thy infant eyes, and with a smile thy mother single out:
"Thy mother well deserves that short delight,
"The nauseous qualms of ten long months, and travel to requite."

The critics, on this passage of the original, are divided in opinion, whether the *risus*, or smile, is meant of the mother or of the child. Warton applies it to the former; Dryden and Beattie to the latter: and as the expression in the original is ambiguous, the preference is merely a matter of taste: I think, for my own part, the latter sense gives a greater beauty to the picture, as well as more propriety to the associated sentiments.

"In the *sixth* Eclogue, the description of sleeping *Silenus* is better in Beattie's translation than in either of the others; though not excellent in any of them. None of the three translators have given the full sense of

"*Inflatum hesterno venas, ut semper Iaccho.*"

Dryden's

"Doz'd with his fumes, and heavy with his load,"

conveys but a small part of the meaning: The significant parenthesis, "*ut semper*," is missed by them all.

"In Eclogue *seventh*, the pleasing apostrophe,

"*Muscosi fontes, et somno mollior herba,*" &c.

is translated by Beattie with more beauty of poetry than by either of his rivals:

"Ye mossy fountains, warbling as ye flow,
"And softer than the slumbers ye bestow;
"Ye grassy banks, ye trees with verdure crowned,
"Whose leaves a glimmering shade diffuse around;
"Grant to my weary flocks a cool retreat,
"And screen them from the summer's raging heat!
"For now the year in brightest glory shines;
"Now reddening clusters deck the bending vines."

BEATTIE.

It is pity that this fine passage should lose any thing of its merit from the mistaken sense in the last line. *Gemmæ* are the *buds* of the vine, and not the *reddening clusters*. "*Jam venit æstas torrida*" does not imply that it is now the season of summer, (which would indeed demand *clusters* and not *buds*) but that the summer is approaching. If it be objected, that the mention of the solstice in the preceding line proves the season to be midsummer, the answer is, that the poet has here confounded all the seasons: for in the next response of Thyrsis, the time of *winter* is plainly marked,——

"*Hîc focus et tædæ pingues, hîc plurimus ignis.*
"——*Hîc tantum Boreæ curamus frigora:*"

then in a moment we return to *spring*,

"*Omnia nunc rident,*" &c.

The characters of the season cannot therefore justify the substitution of *clusters* for *buds*.

"In the *eighth* Eclogue,

"*Sepibus in nostris, parvam te roscida mala,*
"*(Dux ego vester eram) vidi cum matre legentem:*
"*Alter ab undecimo tum me jam ceperat annus;*
"*Jam fragiles poteram a terrâ contingere ramos:*
"*Ut vidi, ut perii, ut me malus abstulit error!*"

It was most difficult to rival in any translation the singular beauty of this original, and certainly impossible to exceed it. Beattie and Dryden are here much on a par; neither of them approaching to excellence, nor yet remarkably deficient: Warton is somewhat better:

"Once with your mother to our fields you came
"For dewy apples—thence I date my flame.
"The choicest fruit I pointed to your view,
"Though young, my raptured soul was fixed on you!
"The boughs I scarce could reach with little arms,
"But then, even then, could feel thy powerful charms:
"Oh, how I gazed in pleasing transport lost!
"How glowed my heart in sweet delusion lost!"

A corresponding passage in the *Aminta* shews that Tasso, had he translated from virgil, could have equalled his original:

"*Essendo io fanciulletto, ai che a pena*
"*Giunger potea con la man pargoletta*
"*A corre i frutti dai piegati rami*
"*Da gli arboscelli, intrinseco divenni*
"*De la piu vaga e cara verginella*
"*Che mai spiegasse al vento chioma d'oro,*" &c.

In pastoral poetry it is often difficult to attain simplicity, without deviating, on the one hand, into coarseness and vulgarity, or, on the other, into flatness and insipidity. The delicacy of Beattie's taste secured him against the former of these errors; but it has not preserved him from falling at times into the feeble and prosaic.

"Eclogue ninth:

"The unexpected day at last is come,
"When a rude alien drives us from our home:
"Hence, hence, ye clowns, the usurper thus commands,
"To me you must resign your ancient lands.
"Thus, helpless and forlorn, we yield to fate;
"And our rapacious lord to mitigate,
"This brace of kids a present I design;
"Which load with curses, O ye Powers divine!"

BEATTIE.

But yet this is better than the vulgar ribaldry of Dryden:

"The time is come I never thought to see,
"(Strange revolution for my farm and me!)
"When the grim captain, in a surly tone,
"Cries out, Pack up, ye rascals, and begone!
"Kicked out, we set the best face on't we could,
"And these two kids, to appease his angry mood,
"I bear, of which the Furies give him good."

"It were easy, dear Sir, to carry this parallel to a much greater length: but enough has been said to answer the end you wished. My opinion you may infer to be this: That of the three translations in question, Warton's is, on the whole, the most perfect; though he has occasionally been excelled in particular passages by both the others: that Beattie's translation, though not equally correct, being in many instances flat and prosaic, has, in the more remarkable and splendid passages, done most justice to the original: and that Dryden, with superior native genius to either of his rivals, has, from carelessness and a defect of taste, in a work which chiefly depended on taste, fallen below them both. There is certainly room for a better translation of the "Pastorals of Virgil," than any we have yet seen. But, when we consider the early age at which Beattie's version must have been composed, and the great improvement of his poetic powers, evinced in his latter compositions, I think it is fair to conclude, that had he given to this translation such amendment as he was capable of bestowing, it would have been hazardous in any poet of the present day to have trodden the same ground."

Note [L.] p. 46.

I have said in the text, at the place referred to, that the "Judgment of "Paris" never was a popular poem, probably owing to its being of too metaphysical a nature, and that it has therefore sunk into oblivion; so that I scarcely think it necessary to revive the memory of it, by the insertion here of the two letters alluded to, and the introductory stanzas, nothwithstanding their beauty of description; as I find, in order to have done this with proper effect, and in the manner I first intended, I must have inserted no fewer than nine-and-twenty stanzas of the poem; a greater proportion of it than the purpose seems to warrant.

Note [M.] p. 49.

I once thought of giving some farther account of Churchill, and of inserting the lines here, with the omission only of the last couplet. But as Churchill is a name so well known to every reader of poetry in Britain, I now think it unnecessary to swell this Appendix with any thing farther than what is already said of him; and as the lines relate to political circumstances, long since out of date, they may also be dispensed with.

Note [N.] p. 53.

As an elegant biographical sketch of the life and writings of Dr Blacklock, written by my friend Mr Henry Mackenzie, and prefixed to a posthumous publication of the Doctor's poems, is already in print, it may seem unnecessary, as well as a piece of great presumption in me, to say any thing here on the subject. But as so strong a friendship subsisted between Dr Beattie and Dr Blacklock, who were in truth congenial spirits, I feel a desire to make this amiable and worthy man better known to such of my readers as may not have met with the posthumous publication of his poems, and Mr Mackenzie's biographical sketch.

The Reverend Dr Thomas Blacklock,—a man very extraordinary at once for his talents as a poet and philosopher, for his acquired knowledge as a scholar, and his virtues as a man and a Christian,—had the misfortune to lose his sight by the small-pox before he was six months old; an age so early, as not to leave with him the slightest remembrance of his having ever possessed that blessing. Though his father was in no higher station than a bricklayer, he gave his son such acquaintance with books as he could, by reading, to amuse him; and his companions assisted in the task, by whose means he acquired some knowledge of Latin. At nineteen he lost his father; yet he was not left destitute of friends, whom Providence brought to his aid. Among others, Dr Stevenson, physician in Edinburgh, having accidentally learned his history, gave to his natural endowments the assistance of a classical education in that university. His acquired knowledge of ancient and modern languages, and of various branches of science, was truly astonishing, not only as an instance of the strongest and most retentive memory, but of the native powers of mind, applied to the most abstruse subjects, under circumstances the most unpropitious.

While at Edinburgh, he published a volume of poems, which attracted the notice of Mr Spence, prebendary of Durham, who wrote an account of his life and character, prefixed to an edition published afterwards in London by subscription. If the descriptions and imagery, which his poetry exhibits, be deemed the result of memory merely, of things of which he never could have had any knowledge, the reader will at the same time find in them the qualities of fancy, tenderness, and sublimity, the thoughts, as well as the elegance and vigour of expression, which characterise the genuine produc-

tions of the poetical talent. One other praise, says his biographer, which the good will value, belongs to them in a high degree; they breathe the purest spirit of piety, virtue and benevolence.*

After applying some time to the study of theology, he became a minister of the church of Scotland, and is said to have excelled as a preacher. But the inhabitants of the parish in which he had been placed, having, through prejudice formed against him from his want of sight, made strong opposition to his settlement, he resigned the living, on receiving a small annuity, and returned to Edinburgh, where he ever after resided.

Beside his poetical compositions, he published several works in prose, of a moral and religious tendency, which do him honour as a philosopher and a Christian, particularly, "Paraclesis, or, Consolations deduced from Natural and Revealed Religion," in two Dissertations: the first, supposed to be written by Cicero, and translated by Dr Blacklock; the other, original, by himself. In the "Encyclopædia Britannica," the article on the *Blind*, written by him, is both curious and instructive.

To those qualities of mind, whether native or acquired, for which he was so remarkable, Dr Blacklock added the utmost goodness of heart, as well as gentleness of manner, but accompanied with the keenest sensibility. In his friendship he was warm to enthusiasm. Of this his correspondence with Dr Beattie affords a striking proof. Their spirits were congenial, and they loved each other with great affection.

Dr Beattie's and Dr Blacklock's first intercourse seems to have arisen from a present, which Dr Blacklock had sent him of his works, accompanied by a copy of verses; to which Dr Beattie replied in a similar manner. It is an ethic epistle, and, in my opinion, of so much merit, that I am sorry Dr Beattie has left it out of the later editions of his poetical works.

His peculiar misfortune gave him a high relish for the pleasures of conversation. In the circle of his friends he seemed to forget the privation of sight, and the melancholy which at other times it produced; and he entered, with the cheerful playfulness of a young man, into all the sprightly narrative, the sportful fancy, and the humorous jest, that rose around him.

Of music he was uncommonly fond; as was extremely natural for one who was blessed with a musical ear, and who found in it a greater source of delight, from the want of other pleasures from which he was shut out by his blindness. He sung with taste; and always carried in his pocket a small flageolet, on which he was by no means averse from being asked to perform, for the amusement of those with whom he happened to be in company.

With Dr Blacklock I had the happiness of being well acquainted; and I look back with gratitude to his memory, for the many instructive hours which I have enjoyed in his company.

The last act of Dr Beattie's friendship for Dr Blacklock, was the composition of the following elegant and classical inscription, which is engraved

* Mr Mackenzie's "Life of Dr Blacklock," prefixed to the posthumous publication of his works.

on his monument at Edinburgh, where he died the 7th July, 1791, in the seventieth year of his age.

Viro reverendo
THOMÆ BLACKLOCK, D. D.
Probo, Pio, Benevolo,
Omnigenâ Doctrinâ erudito,
Poetæ sublimi;
Ab incunabulis usque
Oculis capto,
At hilari, faceto,
Amicisque semper carissimo;
Qui Natus XXI. *Novemb. MDCCXXI.*
Obiit VII. *Julii MDCCXCI:*
Hoc Monumentum
Vidua ejus SARAH JOHNSTON
Mœrens P.

Τον περι μουσ' εφιλησε, διδου δ' αγαθον τε κακον τε,
Οφθαλμων μεν αμερσε, διδου δ' ηδεαν αοιδην.*

Note [O.] p. 80.

William Tytler, Esq. of Woodhouselee,† the esteemed friend of Dr Beattie; who, with the active duties of a laborious profession, in which by his skill and integrity he rose to eminence, combined a more than common store of classical learning, historical knowledge, and a singularly correct taste in the sister arts of poetry, painting, and music; all of which he continued to cultivate and enjoy to the close of a long life.

To his other studies, he had added those of metaphysics and moral philosophy; by means of which he had early become acquainted with Dr Beattie, whom he loved and respected as an able champion of truth, and with whom he ever after continued to live on the footing of the most intimate friendship: as he was also happy in possessing the esteem and regard of many of the most distinguished literary characters of the age, such as, Lord Monboddo, Lord

* *Odyss. lib.* viii. 63. Thus translated by Pope:
"Dear to the muse! who gave his days to flow
"With mighty blessings, mixed with mighty woe:
"With clouds of darkness quenched his visual ray,
"But gave him skill to raise the lofty lay."
POPE'S *Odyssey, b.* viii. *l.* 57.

This is the character applied to Demodocus, the prophet or bard at the court of the King of Phæacia, and by whom Homer is supposed to have designed to represent himself.

† Father of the present Lord Woodhouselee.

Kaimes, Dr John Gregory, Dr Reid, Principal Campbell, Dr Gerard, and many others.

As an author, Mr Tytler was distinguished by his "Inquiry, Historical "and Critical, into the Evidence against Mary Queen of Scots," in opposition to Mr Hume and Dr Robertson, in which he warmly supported the cause of that ill-fated princess, and displayed an uncommon degree of acuteness in the examination of a question, which has been maintained on both sides with consummate ability.

Mr Tytler also published several other works on historical and literary subjects, particularly, "The Poetical Remains of James the First, King of "Scotland;" some part of which he had the merit of having rescued from the oblivion in which it had long lain buried in the Bodleian Library. He has also restored to the same monarch, the popular ballad of "Christ's Kirk "on the Green," so much admired for its wit and humour; but which had been improperly ascribed to his descendant, King James the Fifth.*

To the "Poetical Remains of James the First," Mr Tytler has added a most ingenious "Dissertation on the Scottish Music," a subject of which he was peculiarly fond; and to the poem of "Christ's Kirk on the Green," he has added a note, by which he has vindicated to his old and early friend, Allan Ramsay, the property of the beautiful Scottish pastoral-comedy,

* Mr Tytler, in attributing this excellent and humorous composition to the elder James, rests much of his proof on the evidence of what is called the "Bannatyne Manuscript Collec- "tion of Ancient Scottish Poems," in the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh, and it unquestionably is a very strong one; yet he appears to me not to do all the justice that he might to his own argument. George Bannatyne, one of the canons of the cathedral church of Moray, made that collection, as appears by its date, in the year 1568, only twenty-six years after the death of King James the Fifth, which happened in the year 1542, with whom therefore Bannatyne may be reckoned to have been contemporary. Had the poem been composed by this last Prince, it must have been a fact perfectly well known at that time; so that it never could have been attributed by Bannatyne to the elder James, who had been dead upwards of an hundred years.

"The authority of a MS. written more than a century after the death of James the First," says Lord Hailes, "proves nothing." But if the supposition of Lord Hailes were true, that the poem is the work of James the Fifth, it would in truth be a question, as to Bannatyne's authority, respecting a poem which in that case would be little more than twenty-six years old, and in regard to which, Bannatyne could not well be mistaken; he could never, therefore, have assigned the poem to King James the First. What I allude to when I say, that Mr Tytler does not appear to me to have done full justice to his own argument, is, that when he mentions the signature in Bannatyne as bearing the date of the elder James, Mr Tytler has done it with a numeral (1) merely, instead of printing it at full length. Had Bannatyne so written it, there might have been supposed some confusion between the two numerals (1) and (5), which in ancient MSS. may often be mistaken the one for the other; but in the MS. itself it is plainly written by Bannatyne, "qd. King James the First," which is not liable to any such mistake. Pinkerton, though he gives this poem to King James the First on other grounds, says, "I found no- "thing on the Bannatyne MS. which gives the former ('Christ's Kirk on the Green') to "James the First. For in the next piece save one, it palpably puts *first* for *fourth*, or, "by mistake, *fifth*." (Ancient Scottish Poems, Vol. I. p. lxxxix.) This observation of Pinkerton's, however, is not conclusive; for any one who looks at the Bannatyne MS. will perceive, that the note on the margin is written with different ink from that used in writing the poem to which it refers, and not improbably by a different hand.

As a matter of some curiosity, I trust I shall be pardoned for this disquisition respecting the real author of this very singular specimen of ancient Scottish minstrelsy.

"The Gentle Shepherd;" of which an attempt had been made, most unjustly, to deprive him, by the absurd assertion, that it was only in part the composition of Ramsay.

It appears from a letter in the text,* to have been Dr Beattie's intention to have written the life of his friend, Mr Tytler; and had his health permitted him to have executed such a task, we may be sure, that, like every literary work of his, it would have been highly interesting. Yet it may be reasonably doubted, I think, whether it would have equalled in value the "Account of the Life and Writings of Mr Tytler," read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh by my friend Mr Henry Mackenzie, and published in the Transactions of the Society, Vol. IV. Appendix, p. 17. In that biographical sketch, Mr Mackenzie has given a most interesting and animated portrait of Mr Tytler; to the truth of every word of which I can myself completely bear witness, as I was honoured during many years with his intimate friendship; and it is not without the strongest emotions, that I can now review, in Mr Mackenzie's sketch, the character of my much-respected friend, which he has there so justly depicted. Nor am I less pleased with the opportunity of paying this tribute of gratitude to the memory of one, with whom I have spent many an instructive, as well as many a happy convivial hour.

Mr Tytler was born at Edinburgh, 12th October, 1711, and died 12th September, 1792.

Note [P.] p. 82.

The account of Ross of Lochlee, author of the "Fortunate Shepherdess," and other poems in the broad Scots dialect, given in this letter of Dr Beattie's to Dr Blacklock, is not only curious, as containing the account of a native and self-taught poet, but as a proof of the innate goodness of Dr Beattie's heart, who, in order to serve this poor man, not only wrote and published in the newspaper of Aberdeen a recommendatory letter in prose, but addressed a copy of verses to Mr Ross, in the same dialect; the first and only time Dr Beattie ever attempted to write in that manner. I had once thoughts of inserting the verses here, as a literary curiosity; but considering, that the dialect in which they are written must be completely unintelligible to every native of England, I laid aside the intention. In justice to Dr Beattie, I may be allowed to add, however, that the verses are far from being destitute of merit in their way, and show the versatility of Dr Beattie's genius. The ninth stanza, in particular, contains a picture of a pastoral scene, so beautiful, and drawn so exactly after nature, that I am per-

* Vide supra, p. 299.

suaded no native of Scotland, possessed of any taste, can read it without singular delight. I have ventured to insert it here.

O bonny are our greensward hows,*
Where through the birks† the burny‡ rows,§
And the bee bums,‖ and the ox lows,
And saft¶ winds rusle,
And shepherd-lads on sunny knows,**
Blaw†† the blythe whistle.

Note [Q.] p. 97.

Dr Hawkesworth was first known as a literary character by the publication of the "Adventurer," a periodical paper begun in the year 1752, and continued to 1754; than which none since the days of the "Spectator" is better entitled to high commendation. With less of stiffness and formality than the "Rambler" and "Idler" of Johnson, and more of real instruction than the "World" or "Connoisseur," the chief periodical papers of our own times of ascertained merit, the "Adventurer" seems to combine the peculiar merits of them all; so that I do not know, if, since the days of Addison and Steele, who had the merit of introducing into the circle of English literature that popular and excellent form of composition, a work of higher value of that nature has appeared than the "Adventurer."

Dr Hawkesworth's next publication was "Almoran and Hamet," a very beautiful Oriental tale. He then published a translation of the Archbishop of Cambray's celebrated epic poem, the "Adventures of Telemachus," in elegant prose. His last work was, "An Account of the Voyages undertaken by the order of his present Majesty, for making Discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere:" a publication, which, though it produced to Dr Hawkesworth a largesum of money,‡‡ added little to his fame as an author, or to his reputation as a moralist. In the preface to that publication, are some very vague and ill-digested ideas respecting the doctrine of a particular Providence; and some parts of his narrative respecting the manners and customs of the natives of Otaheite, if too strongly verified to admit of any doubt as to the truth of the story, had better, for the credit of human nature, and the good of society, have remained unpublished to the world.

Dr Hawkesworth lived at Bromley, in Kent, where I had the pleasure of his acquaintance, and died 16th November, 1783, aged fifty-eight. The following beautiful quotation from the concluding paper of the "Adventurer," closes the inscription on his monument in Bromley church: "The hour is hasting, in which whatever praise or censure I have acquired will be remembered with equal indifference. Time, who is impatient to date my last paper, will shortly moulder the hand which is now writing it in the dust,

* Green hollows. † Birch-trees. ‡ Brook. § Meanders. ‖ Hums.
¶ Soft. ** Knolls. †† Blow.

‡‡ It is said, no less than six thousand pounds.

" and still the breast that now throbs at the reflection. But let not this be " read as something that relates only to another; for a few years only can " divide the eye that is now reading, from the hand that has written."

Note [R.] p. 105.

Major Mercer was the son of a private gentleman in Aberdeenshire, who, having joined the Highland army in the year 1745, retired to France after the battle of Culloden, where he resided till his death. His son received his education at the Marischal College, Aberdeen, and afterwards went to reside with his father at Paris. There he spent his time in elegant society, and devoted his leisure hours to the cultivation of letters. Thus he acquired those polished manners, and that taste for study, by which he was ever after so highly distinguished. He possessed, too, a very high degree of elegant and chastised wit and humour, which made his company to be universally sought after by those who had the happiness of his friendship or acquaintance.

On the death of his father he returned to Scotland, and soon afterwards entered into the army, at the commencement of the Seven Years War; during the greatest part of which he served in Germany under Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, and was in one of the six British regiments of infantry, that gained such reputation for their gallantry at the memorable battle of Minden.

The regiment in which he afterwards served, being reduced at the Peace of Paris, he returned to Aberdeen, where he married Miss Katharine Douglas, sister to Lord Glenbervie, a beautiful and accomplished woman, with whom he lived many years in much happiness.

In order to fill up the vacant hours of his then unemployed situation, he devoted his time chiefly to books, and in particular recommenced the study of the Greek language, (of which he had acquired the rudiments under the learned Dr Blackwell at Marischal College) with such assiduity, that Dr Beattie, in another letter, says, he doubted whether there were in Scotland at that time six gentlemen who knew Greek so well as Major Mercer. Then it was, that by attention to the purest models of antiquity, he corrected that partiality for French literature, which he had strongly imbibed by his early habits of study at Paris.

Not long after, he again entered into the army, in which he continued to serve till about the year 1772, when he had arrived at the rank of Major. But he then quitted the profession, and only resumed a military character, when he held a commission in a regiment of Fencibles during the American war. On the return of peace he retired with his family to Aberdeen, where he continued chiefly to reside during the rest of his life.

An acquaintance had first taken place between him and Dr Beattie, on his return to Aberdeen, after the Seven Years War; and as their taste in books and their favourite studies were in some respects entirely similar, a lasting friendship ensued, which proved to both a source of the highest enjoyment.

Major Mercer's acquaintance with books, especially of poetry and *belles lettres*, both ancient and modern, was not only uncommonly extensive, but he himself possessed a rich and genuine poetical vein, that led him, for his own amusement solely, to the composition of some highly finished lyric pieces. These he carefully concealed, however, from the knowledge of even almost all his most intimate friends; and it was with much difficulty that his brother-in-law, Lord Glenbervie, at length could prevail on him to permit a small collection to be printed, first anonymously, afterwards with his name. In perusing these beautiful poems, the reader, I think, will find they possess much original genius, and display a taste formed on the best classic writers of Greece and Rome, whose spirit their author had completely imbibed, especially of Horace, who seems to have been the model whom he had proposed to himself for his imitation.

A few years ago, Major Mercer had the misfortune to lose his wife, after a long course of severe indisposition, during which he had tended her with the most anxious assiduity. Of that misfortune, indeed, he may be said never to have got the better; and he survived her little more than two years. That circumstance gave occasion to some elegant lines which Mr Hayley addressed to Lord Glenbervie, soon after Major Mercer's death.* He had long been in a very valetudinary, nervous state, till at last his constitution entirely failed, and he expired without a struggle or a pang, in the seventy-first year of his age.

Besides possessing no ordinary share of knowledge both of books and men, (for in the course of his military life especially, he had lived much in society of various sorts,) and being one of the pleasantest companions I ever knew, Major Mercer was a man of much piety, strict in the observance of all the ordinances of religion, and of high honour in every transaction of life.

Being my relation, although somewhat older, he was one of the earliest companions of my playful hours; and we continued through life the steadiest friends and most constant correspondents. It is, therefore, with a melancholy yet pleasing satisfaction, that I look back on that intercourse of friendship, which subsisted between us during more than half a century, without interruption and without decay.

Major Mercer was born 27th February, 1734, and died 18th November, 1804.

* EPITAPH FOR MAJOR MERCER.

Around this grave, ye types of merit spread!
Here Mercer shares the Sabbath of the dead:
Ye laurels, here, with double lustre, bloom,
To deck a soldier's and a poet's tomb!
Gracefully pleasing in each manly part!
His verses, like his virtues, win the heart.
Grateful for wedded bliss, (for years his pride!)
He lost it, and, by fond affliction, died.
Here, Sculpture! fix thy emblematic dove,
To grace the martyr of connubial love!
Hail, ye just pair! in blest re-union rise!
Revered on earth! rewarded in the skies!

Note [S.] p. 106.

The reader will be pleased to excuse an inaccuracy in the reference here.

Note [T.] p. 140.

The following words which are printed in Italics, are those on which Mr Gray had made remarks, together with the changes made by Dr Beattie, which are printed in the second column in Roman characters :

Stanza 2. *Obstreperous*, is retained.
3. *Bending*, is retained.
4. *Pensions*, &c.
5. *Plaister*, &c. } These three excellently altered.
6. *Female heart*, &c.
7. *Rise, sons of harmony*, &c. No change made.
8, 9, 10, 11. All preserved entire.
12. *Rambling*, changed to *roving*.
17. *Simple*, changed to *humble*.
18. *Mad*, is retained.
23, to 39. How they had been originally altered by Mr Gray's advice, does not appear.

Stanza 34. The alliteration is preserved.
36, 37, 38.* Remain unaltered. On this part of the poem Mr Gray is perfectly just in saying, that it has been remarked by others as well as by him, that the author indulges a little too much in *description* and *reflection*.
42. All preserved.
46. *Infuriate*, is preserved.
52. *Medium, incongruous*, &c. are retained.
54. Not altered.
56. *Vernal*, changed to *autumnal*.
62. In the first edition, it was dedicated to a male friend, although the name be left blank†. In the second it is inscribed to Mrs. Montagu.

Note [U.] p. 152.

The epitaph, here alluded to, is that, I believe, first printed in the edition of his poems in the year 1777, with the title,

BEING PART OF AN INSCRIPTION FOR A MONUMENT TO BE ERECTED BY A GENTLEMAN TO THE MEMORY OF HIS LADY.

and beginning,

" Farewell, my best-beloved! whose heavenly mind,
" Genius with virtue, strength with softness joined."

* Stanza 38. This alludes to a singular but deep-rooted aversion, which Dr Beattie all his life evinced for the crowing of a cock.

† Mr Arbuthnot.

It was written at the request of his dear and intimate friend, Dr John Gregory, for his wife, the Honourable Mrs. Elizabeth Forbes, daughter of William, Lord Forbes, a very amiable and most accomplished woman, who died at Aberdeen 27th September, 1761; and has been published in all the subsequent editions of Dr Beattie's poems. I may add, that I perceive, by some of the letters interchanged between them at the time, that this inscription is mentioned by Dr Gregory with much approbation.

Note [X.] p. 152.

The gentleman to whom Dr Beattie was indebted for this musical curiosity, was Archibald Menzies, Esq. of Culdares, in Perthshire, North Britain, and one of the Commissioners of his Majesty's Customs for Scotland, who had made a tour among the Greek islands in the Levant, and being fond of music, had brought home with him this composition as a curiosity; but of the antiquity and authenticity of which Dr. Beattie seems to have entertained great doubts; which, to be sure, tend much to diminish its value. The transcription of the music, as well as of the note subjoined to this page, are *fac similes* of Dr Beattie's handwriting.

I have seen another copy of this tune, which was given by the same gentleman, Mr Menzies, to Lord Monboddo; whose love for every thing that was Greek, is well known. On the back of Lord Monboddo's copy is the following memorandum: "A tune to which the Greeks at present dance, "called *Romeka*. It imitates the winding of a labyrinth; and is supposed "to be that which Theseus brought from Crete to Greece when he returned "with Ariadne. It is mentioned by Homer in the shield, as having been "taught Ariadne by Dædalus. Plutarch also speaks of it in the life of "Theseus, and Eustathius in his Commentary upon Homer. It is danced "upon all solemn occasions; and the person who leads the dance, carries a "handkerchief in his hand, representing the signal which Theseus was to "make if he returned victorious. It begins very slow, increasing still in "quickness, and then gradually sinking into a slow movement, as at the be-"ginning."

Note [Y.] p. 274.

The publication of the "Essay on Truth" forms so distinguished an æra, not only in the life of Dr. Beattie, but even in the literary history of his country, that I feel it as a duty to offer to those of my younger readers, who may not yet be acquainted with the work, a short abstract of its contents: and I should be proud to think, that I could in any way contribute to the dissemination of a work, which was designed by its author for the young, and which never can be studied by them without great moral and intellectual improvement.

The "Essay on Truth" is divided by the author into three great parts, or subjects of inquiry.

In the first part, it is his object, "To trace the several kinds of evidence "and reasoning up to their first principles, with a view to ascertain the stan- "dard of truth, and explain its immutability.

The object of the second part, is to show, "That his sentiments on this "head, however inconsistent with the genius of scepticism, and with the "practice and principles of sceptical writers, are yet perfectly consistent "with the genius of true philosophy, and with the practice and principles of "those, whom all acknowledge to have been the most successful in the in- "vestigation of truth:" and "that there are rules, by which the more im- "portant fallacies of the sceptical philosophy may be detected by every per- "son of common sense, even though he should not possess acuteness or me- "taphysical knowledge sufficient to qualify him for a logical confutation of "them."

The object of the third part is, "To answer some objections which he "anticipates, and to make some farther remarks by way of estimate of scep- "ticism and sceptical writers."

According to this division, the first part consists of two chapters. In the first of these, Dr. Beattie investigates "the perception of truth in general." He begins by shewing, that belief is a simple act of mind, which admits of no definition or description in words, and that truth is that which the constitution of our nature determines us to believe, and falsehood that which the constitution of our nature determines us to disbelieve. Truth, however, is of two kinds, or is perceived by two different faculties; that which we perceive by the intervention or in consequence of a proof, and that which we perceive immediately and from the original laws of our constitution. The faculty by which we perceive truths of the first kind, is *Reason*, or "that "faculty which enables us, from relations or ideas that are known, to inves- "tigate such as are unknown, and without which we never could proceed in "the discovery of truth a single step beyond first principles or intuitive "axioms." To that faculty, on the other hand, by which we perceive truths of the second kind, or self-evident truths, he assigns the name of *Common Sense*, and he employs this term to denote "that power of the mind which "perceives truth or commands belief, not by progressive argumentation, but "by an instantaneous, instinctive, and irresistible impulse, derived neither "from education nor from habit, but from nature." As it acts independently of our will, whenever its object is presented, according to an established law of mind, he considers it to be properly a *sense*: and as it acts in a similar manner upon all mankind, when in fair and natural circumstances, he considers it as properly called *common sense*.

From this exposition of his principles, Dr. Beattie proceeds in the *second chapter* to shew, "That all reasoning, in fact, terminates in first principles; "and that all evidence is ultimately intuitive, or perceived by that power of "mind which he distinguishes by the name of *Common Sense*." To substantiate this fundamental principle of his doctrine, he enters into a long and luminous illustration of its truth, from the general experience of mankind in the various species of evidence. He considers, in separate articles, the ma-

ture of that evidence which takes place in mathematical science; the evidence of our external senses, of consciousness and of memory; the evidence which governs our reasoning from the effect to the cause; the evidence which takes place in probable and in analogical reasoning; and finally, that species of evidence which determines our belief in human testimony. And from this wide and comprehensive induction, he arrives at last at the following conclusions: "That unless we believe many things without proof, we never can "believe any thing at all: that all sound reasoning must ultimately rest on "the principles of *common sense*, that is, on principles intuitively certain, "or intuitively probable: and consequently, that common sense is the ulti- "mate judge of truth, to which reason must continually act in subordina- "tion."

II. Having thus ascertained the existence of certain ultimate truths, which are perceived by an appropriate faculty of the human mind, and upon which it thus appears that all reasoning, in fact, is founded, Dr. Beattie goes on, in the second part of his work, to establish these conclusions, by the actual experience of all legitimate philosophy, and by the practice of all those who have been the most successful in the investigation of truth. For this purpose he exemplifies his doctrines by the instances of mathematical and physical science, in which it is universally acknowledged, that the greatest advances of human discovery have been made. He shews, that in the former of these sciences, all reasoning rests upon intuitive evidence, and in the latter, upon the evidence of sense; and that if the mathematician or natural philosopher had deserted these grounds of their reasoning, or doubted of the evidence they convey, their several sciences must have stopped in the threshold, and degenerated into verbal and unproductive controversy. It is from this satisfactory illustration, that Dr Beattie goes on with great advantage to the analysis of that sceptical philosophy, which it was the great end of his labours to combat. For this end, he enters, in the second chapter, into an historical account of the progress of this philosophy in modern times, from its first appearance in the works of Des Cartes, to its final completion in the writings of Mr Hume. He shews, that its principles are directly the reverse of those which have governed the investigations of the mathematician and the natural philosopher; that it substitutes the evidence of reasoning for that of common sense: that its essence consists in the rejection of all those ultimate truths, upon the admission of which the certainty of all other sciences is founded; and that it terminates in conclusions, which contradict all the most genuine and universal principles of human belief. To illustrate the nature of this sceptical system still farther, he selects two remarkable examples of the doctrines of the sceptical philosophy, and of the mode of reasoning by which they are supported, viz. *the doctrines of the non-existence of matter*, and *of the necessity of human actions*. And from the analysis of these reasonings, he shews, that, in common with all the reasonings of this philosophical system, they are marked by these peculiar characteristics: "That the doctrines they are intended to establish, are contradictory "to the general belief of all men in all ages: that though enforced and sup-

"ported with singular subtilty, and though admitted by some professed phi-
"losophers, they do not produce that conviction which sound reasoning ne-
"ver fails to produce in the intelligent mind: and, lastly, that really to be-
"lieve, and to act from a real belief, of such doctrines and reasonings, must
"be attended with fatal consequences to science, to virtue, to human society,
"and to all the important interests of mankind."

III. In the third part, under the appearance of answering the objections which he anticipates, Dr. Beattie pursues, with great force, his argument, against that system of sceptical philosophy which he had before analysed.

In the first chapter, in replying to the objection, "That his system tends "to discourage freedom of inquiry, and to encourage implicit faith;" he distinguishes between that implicit faith, which consists in acquiescence with the doctrines of men, and that which consists in acquiescence with the fundamental laws of intellectual and moral belief; and shews, that as the last is the foundation of all legitimate philosophy, it is that also which alone his doctrine encourages and promotes.

To a second objection, "That his system of philosophy is not strictly ac-
"cording to logic, or some of the established laws of that science," he replies, by admitting the objection, but by distinguishing between that technical logic which has obtained in the schools, and that rational logic which is founded on the knowledge of the faculties of man, and the established laws of his constitution. With the last of these, he shews, that his system is entirely consistent, and that it agrees in its principles with that enlightened system of investigation which was recommended by Lord Bacon: and in the illustration of this important subject, he enters, in the second chapter, into a long and ingenious disquisition, to shew, that the logic of the schoolmen was the legitimate parent of the modern system of scepticism; that the principles of both are to doubt of every thing, and to consider every thing as a subject of dispute; that the investigations in both are chiefly supported either by the illusion of words, or the evidence of a narrow and partial induction; and that they both lead to conclusions contrary either to experience, or to truths of the most indisputable authority.

In the concluding chapter, in answer to the objection, "That he has re-
"presented the consequences of metaphysical error as more fatal than they
"are found to be in fact," Dr Beattie enters into a warm and eloquent display of the reality of these consequences. He shews, that the system which he has combated, is hostile equally to the moral and the intellectual character of man; that it establishes a method of reasoning, sufficient to overturn every truth upon which his virtue or his piety is rested; and that no man can adopt it without losing all the convictions which can render human life either honourable or happy.

As the doctrines and language of the "Essay on Truth" have met with some opposition by later writers, particularly by Dr Priestley and his followers, I had hoped to gratify my readers with some observations on that subject by my friend Mr Professor Stewart, who supports the great doctrines of Dr Reid and Dr Beattie, in the chair of moral philosophy in this univer-

sity, with a force of reasoning, and a dignity of eloquence, altogether his own. But in this hope I have been disappointed by some unavoidable interruptions, to which Mr Stewart has been exposed, that have put it out of his power to fulfil his intention. I should the more have lamented this misfortune, did I not trust that he may hereafter give those observations a place in some of his own compositions.

Mr Stewart's observations were to be communicated to me in a letter, of which he had only been able to prepare the rough draught: but the account of Dr Beattie's mode of writing on philosophical subjects, and the eloquent encomium with which he meant to wind up the whole, are so truly characteristic of my deceased friend, that I cannot resist the desire of inserting them here.

"* * * * In a work professedly polemical," says Mr Stewart, "it was impossible for the author to aim at unity or at elegance of design; but what was really practicable, he appears to me to have executed with an uncommon degree of skill and judgment; arranging his materials in a distinct and luminous order, and leading the attention agreeably from one part of his argument to another, by those happy transitions, which form one of the chief secrets in the art of composition;—above all, enlivening and adorning his important subject, (so unattractive in itself to the generality of readers) by a power of varied and happy illustration, peculiarly characteristical of his own genius. * * * *

"These critical remarks on the "Essay on Truth" (I must request you to observe,) says Mr Stewart, "do not in the least affect the essential merits of that very valuable performance; and I have stated them with the greater freedom, because your late excellent friend possessed so many other unquestionable claims to high distinction—as a moralist, as a critic, as a grammarian, as a pure and classical writer, and, above all, as the author of the "*Minstrel*." In any one of the different paths to which his ambition has led him, it would not perhaps be difficult to name *some* of his contemporaries by whom he has been surpassed; but where is the individual to be found, who has aspired with greater success to an equal variety of literary honours?

"I am happy to think, that the moral effect of his works is likely to be so powerfully increased by the Memoirs of his exemplary life, which you are preparing for the press; while the respect which the public already entertains for his genius and talents, cannot fail to be blended with other sentiments still more flattering to his memory, when it is known with what fortitude and resignation he submitted to a series of trials, far exceeding those which fall to the common lot of humanity; and that the most vigorous exertions of his mind were made, under the continued pressure of the severest domestic affliction, which a heart like his could be doomed to suffer.

"* * * I regret the extravagant length to which this letter has insensibly extended; but I have no time to attempt an abridgment of its contents. I hope, however, (if you think any part of it worth a place in your Appendix) that you may consider yourself as at perfect liberty to make whatever re-

trenchments may appear to you to be proper; marking with asterisks the place of any paragraph you may be pleased to omit, in order to account for the want of connection," &c. &c.

To Sir WILLIAM FORBES, Bart.

Dr Beattie's philosophical writings may be properly divided into two classes, Morality and Criticism. But *these* are so intimately blended in his works, as materially to support each other; and he loses no proper opportunity, even on subjects that seem least to promise him the means of enforcing moral truths, to impress upon the minds of his readers, such views of human nature as tend to ennoble the understanding, and improve the heart.

Besides his great work, his "Essay on Truth," *that* to which he owed the first dawn and subsequent advancement of his reputation as a moral philosopher, there still remains to be given, however, some account of his other Essays. I shall endeavour to do this as briefly as possible, and in such a manner, as that the reader, before he begins to the perusal, may have some idea of what sort of instruction, or entertainment, he is likely to meet with.

In his first Essay, Dr Beattie has given some analysis of the sister arts of poetry and music, with a view to discover how they affect the mind. He was led, he says, to this dissertation, by having heard it urged, that taste is capricious, and criticism variable; and that the rules of Aristotle, being founded on the practice of Sophocles and Homer, ought not to be applied to poems of other ages and nations. He admits the plea, he says, as far as those rules are local and temporary; but asserts, that many of them, being founded in nature, are indispensable, and not to be violated without impropriety. Notwithstanding its apparent licentiousness, he maintains, that true poetry is a thing perfectly rational and regular; and that nothing can be more strictly philosophical than *that* part of criticism may, and ought to be, which unfolds the general characters which distinguish it from other kinds of composition.

In the commencement of this Essay, Dr Beattie examines a question which has been a good deal agitated among the critics, What is the end of poetry? Whether to give pleasure, or to convey instruction? and he decides in favour of the first. To instruct, he says, is an end common to all good writing. If the historian and philosopher accomplish this, they will be allowed to have acquitted themselves well; but the poet must do a great deal for the sake of pleasure only; and if he fail to please, he may deserve praise on other accounts, but as a poet he has done nothing. Having occasion, in the course of this disquisition, to mention Dryden, he delivers his opinion of that great genius; gives a character of his writings at considerable length, and draws a very masterly comparison between him and Pope.

In his second chapter, speaking of the standard of poetical invention, he takes occasion to introduce an animated and beautiful eulogium on the advantages and pleasure to be derived from the study and contemplation of the

works of nature; a theme on which he delighted much to expatiate. In this disquisition, he introduces a character of Swift and some of his writings, particularly his "*Gulliver's Travels*," the latter part of which he severely reprobates. In his next chapter, he shows, that poetry exhibits a state of nature somewhat different from the reality of things; and this he illustrates by a variety of observations drawn from contemplating the human character. In the prosecution of this subject, he takes occasion to enter into some examination of the divine poems of Homer, Virgil, and Milton, and of the merit of the characters found in each.

Connected with the subject of poetry, Dr Beattie next introduces into this Essay, remarks on *music*, as it affects the mind: and here he first examines the question, Whether music be an imitative art? which he resolves in the negative. This he illustrates by a variety of the happiest observations, drawn from the nature of the human mind, as well as the practice of the best masters, both in music and poetry.

In his following section he enquires, How the pleasures we derive from music are to be accounted for? He is well aware, he says, of the difficulty of this question. He therefore promises nothing more than a few cursory remarks. Yet into these remarks he has contrived to introduce a variety of reflections, founded in sound sense, in true philosophy, a love of virtue, and consummate knowledge of human nature.

Then follows a section on the peculiarities of national music; in the course of which he particularly examines the two very different species of music peculiar to the Highlands and southern parts of Scotland; and shows how they naturally accord with the face of the country in those opposite regions. This section will be perused with interest by every native of Scotland. It is here that he has introduced a Disquisition on the *Second Sight*, which he justly treats as a visionary, though popular, belief in the Highlands of Scotland.

In the second part of this Essay, he treats, at considerable length, of *Poetical Language*, and introduces many ingenious, instructive, and pleasing elucidations, of epic, dramatic, and other species of poetry; and all this he illustrates by a variety of apposite examples from the most esteemed poems, both of ancient and modern times. Towards the close of this Essay, he enters, at considerable length, into an examination of the structure of verse. But for all this the reader must consult the Essay itself, which will afford him a high gratification.

Every reader of any taste will be struck with the observation, that, in this Essay on Poetry and Music, the language is more ornamented than in any other part of his philosophical works. I have elsewhere remarked, that although the characteristic qualities of Dr Beattie's style are perspicuity, simplicity, and elegance, it is far from being destitute of sublimity. Of that assertion, I have drawn most of my proofs from this very Essay.* And here it is curious to remark the manner in which our philosophical poet has express-

* Vide supra, p. 332.

ed the same sentiment in elegant and pathetic prose, and in chaste and harmonious verse. "It is strange," he says, "to observe the callousness of "some men, before whom all the glories of heaven and earth pass in daily "succession, without touching their hearts, elevating their fancy, or leaving "any durable remembrance. Even of those who pretend to sensibility, how "many are there, to whom the lustre of the rising or setting sun; the sparkling concave of the midnight sky; the mountain forest tossing and roaring to the storm, or warbling with all the melodies of a summer-evening; "the sweet interchange of hill and dale, shade and sun-shine, grove, lawn, "and water, which an extensive landscape offers to the view; the scenery "of the ocean, so lovely, so majestic, and so tremendous; the many pleasing "varieties of the animal and vegetable kingdom, could never afford so much "real satisfaction, as the steams and noise of a ball-room, the insipid fiddling and squalling of an opera, or the vexations and wranglings of a card-table."*

This is the very same sentiment with that so beautifully expressed in the "Minstrel."

"O how canst thou renounce the boundless store
"Of charms, which nature to her votary yields?
"The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
"The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields,
"All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
"And all that echoes to the song of even,
"All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,
"And all the dread magnificence of heaven,
"Oh how canst thou renounce, and hope to be forgiven!"

Minstrel, Book I. Stanza IX.

His following Essay is on *Laughter*, in which he says, that in tracing out the cause of laughter, he means rather to illustrate, than to confute the opinions of those who have already written on the same subject. Yet notwithstanding former discoveries, the following Essay, he thinks, may be found perhaps to contain something new, to throw light on certain points of criticism that have not been much attended to, and even to have some merit as a familiar example of philosophical induction, carried on with a strict regard to fact, and without any bias in favour of any theory.

He sets out with marking the distinction between *ridiculous* and *ludicrous* ideas, as both exciting *laughter*, although in different ways; and this leads him to divide *laughter* into two kinds, which he distinguishes into, what he calls, *animal* and *sentimental*. He then gives the several opinions, which different philosophers have entertained on the subject, Aristotle, Hobbes, Hutcheson, Akenside, and this leads him to enquire into the cause of laughter. In the course of these disquisitions, he has introduced and treated of

* Essay on Poetry and Music, Part I. chap. ii. p. 369.

a variety of literary topics, which he has embellished with infinite art and critical skill; and in doing this, he has contrived, with a dexterity peculiar to himself, even from so unpromising a subject as *Laughter and Ludicrous Composition*, to introduce some moral disquisitions of great value, with characters of comedies, and satires, and novels, in such a manner, as to show the charms of virtue, the efficacy of religion, and the odious deformity of vice. In particular, he reprobates, with becoming zeal and propriety, all those attempts to excite ridicule and laughter, by parodies of scripture, and profane allusions to sacred things. His concluding chapter is an attempt to account for the superiority of the moderns, in ludicrous writing, over the ancients, which he clearly decides in favour of the former, and in proof of which he produces many ingenious arguments.

Upon the whole, this is an admirable Essay; displaying much knowledge of the human heart and understanding; and whence, whoever reads it with attention, will reap both entertainment and instruction in no ordinary measure.

The concluding Essay, in this volume, contains remarks on the utility of classical learning; in which he combats the absurd idea, that the study of Greek and Roman learning is of little or no value, and may very readily be dispensed with. He strongly urges all the usual arguments in support of his proposition, with perspicuity and force; and in the most satisfactory manner answers all the hackneyed objections that have been brought forward by those, who undervalue classical learning, which, as Dr Beattie has justly observed, he, who is possessed of, would not relinquish on any consideration; and that those persons are most delighted with the ancient writers, who understand them best.

Such were the Essays, which Dr Beattie added to that edition of the "Essay on Truth," published in 1776; and which, it must be allowed, were a very valuable present to his subscribers to that excellent performance.

He afterwards published, in the year 1783, "Dissertations Moral and "Critical," of which I proceed to give some brief account.

They were first composed, as Dr Beattie tells in his preface, in a different form, being part of a course of prelections, read to those young gentlemen, whom it was his business to initiate in the elements of moral science. This, he hopes, will account for the frequent plainness of the style; for the introduction of practical and serious observations; and for a greater variety of illustration, than would have been requisite, if his hearers had been of riper years, or more accustomed to abstract enquiry. He had been desired to publish the whole system of lectures, but had been prevented by many considerations. He therefore gave only a few detached passages, and wished them to be considered as separate and distinct Essays. In treating of them, he wished to avoid all matters of nice curiosity, and confine himself to such as seem to promise amusement and practical information.

The first Essay is on *Memory and Imagination*. It commences with some general observations on the natural connection between the soul and body, while we remain in this world, as far as *memory* is concerned, which

he justly considers as one of those peculiarities that distinguish man from the inferior animals.

In his first chapter, he marks the difference between *memory* and *imagination*. In his second chapter, he gives a general account of this faculty, its phenomena and laws, and shows, that the great art of *memory* is *attention*. This part of his subject he illustrates by a variety of lively and ingenious observations. Among other things, he gives account of a curious invention, frequently spoken of by the old rhetoricians, under the name of *artificial memory*, whereof both Cicero and Quintilian have given an account, though neither of them so distinctly as could be wished. Of this, he gives what, he says, he conceives to be a description, but which, if just, he agrees with Quintilian that it was too complex; and I suppose it will be generally allowed, that to remember the art would require as great an exertion of thought and memory, as would be necessary to keep in mind the thing to be remembered. Here he introduces a dissertation on hand-writing, as connected with transcription, which he deems an useful help to memory. He then goes on to show the varieties of *memory*; and after having touched on these points, he gives us a very sensible chapter on the various methods of improving *memory*, which he concludes with a disquisition on the oratory of the pulpit, the bar, and the senate, comparing the one mode of public speaking with the other; in the course of which he examines the question, whether sermons ought to be delivered from memory, or from a written copy, and clearly gives the preference to the latter: for which he quotes the authority of some of the most esteemed preachers of the church of England.* For the truth of this remark, he appeals to "those who have had the happiness to observe, "and to feel, that sublime and apostolic simplicity, and that mild, though "commanding energy, which distinguish both the composition and the pro-"nunciation of a Porteus and a Hurd."†

The concluding chapter of this ingenious Essay is occupied with remarks on the memory of brutes, which he admits they enjoy in a certain degree. Yet with all the helps which animals derive from instinct, or from more acute organs of sense, how inferior, he exclaims, is the memory of the most intelligent brute to that of reasonable beings! The disproportion is almost infinite. He then gives an animated and brilliant eulogium on the extent and capacity of the human memory, and of the powers of which he gives a slight recapitulation in the most glowing colours. I lament that the plan and limited nature of this analysis forbid my giving here the whole of this beautiful passage; but I cannot resist the pleasure of quoting the sublime conclusion of this energetic address to his audience.

"Let us hence learn," says he, "to set a proper value on the dignity of "the human soul; and to think of its intellectual faculties as inexpressibly "superior, both in kind and in degree, to those of the animal world. If we "be capable of endless improvement (and what reason is there to believe "that we are not), surely our destination must be different from theirs; for,

* Dissert. Mor. and Critic. p. 47—57.

† The present Bishops of London and Worcester.

"the author of nature does nothing in vain; and an understanding, far more "limited than that of man, would be sufficient for all the purposes of a crea-"ture, whose duration is circumscribed by the term of an hundred years. "Our minds, therefore, must have been destined for scenes of improvement "more extensive and glorious, than these below; and our being to compre-"hend periods more durable, than those that are measured out by the "sun."*

In his subsequent Dissertation, on *Imagination*, Dr Beattie gives a general account of that faculty of the mind. He treats of the association of ideas, and the various causes whence it proceeds. He then introduces a disquisition on the origin of beauty, for which he in part endeavours to account; and he has two chapters, the one containing remarks on *Genius*, and the other on *Taste* and its improvements, as they are connected with the *Imagination*. This dissertation, which is of considerable length, will be deemed, I suspect, by most of his readers, at least it surely appears so to me, to be of rather too abstracted and metaphysical a nature. Yet it certainly contains much depth of thinking, and many proofs of original genius, as well as critical knowledge, which those readers who are fond of such speculations, will peruse with pleasure. He concludes this Essay, by returning to the subject of *Imagination*; with some directions for a proper regulation of it. This last part of his subject is highly interesting, and very much intended for the use of studious and literary persons. Unhappily, he was but too well qualified, from his own melancholy experience, and the dreadful condition to which his own health had been reduced, by intense application to study, to treat on the evils attendant on a literary course of life. In the close of this Essay, he seizes, as usual the opportunity of introducing a most beautiful eulogy on the genius and spirit of the Christian religion, in language so expressive and appropriate, that I cannot resist the pleasure of transcribing it here.

"Lastly," says Dr Beattie, "let those who wish to preserve their imagi-"nation in a cheerful and healthy state, cultivate piety, and guard against "superstition; by forming right notions of God's adorable being and provi-"dence, and cherishing the correspondent affections of love, veneration, and "gratitude. Superstition is fierce and gloomy; but true Christianity gives "glory to the divine nature, and is most comfortable to the human. It "teaches, that nothing happens, but by the permission of Him, who is "greatest, wisest, and best; that the adversities which befal us may all be "improved into blessings: that man is indeed a sinful creature; but that "God has graciously provided for him the means both of pardon and of hap-"piness; that if we obey the Gospel, than which no system of doctrine can "be more excellent in itself, or supported by better evidence; *Our light af-"flictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out for us an eternal weight "of glory:* for that when these transitory scenes disappear, an endless state "of things will commence, wherein virtue shall triumph, and all her tears be

* Dissertations Moral and Critical, p. 68.

"wiped away for ever; wherein there will be as much felicity, as the most "exalted benevolence can desire, and no more punishment, than the most "perfect justice will approve. He who believes all this, and endeavours to "act accordingly, must look upon the calamities of life as not very material; "and, while he retains the command of his faculties, may have continually "present to his imagination the most sublime, and most transporting views, "that it is possible for a human being either to wish for, or to compre-"hend."

"The divine Omnipotence ought at all times to inspire us with venera-"tion and holy fear. By the simplest means, or without any means, it can "accomplish the most important purposes. This very faculty of imagina-"tion, the Deity can make to each of us, even in this world, the instrument "of exquisite happiness, or consummate misery, by setting before it the most "glorious objects of hope, or the most tremendous images of despair. What "a blessing are cheerful thoughts, and a sound imagination! And what man "can say, that his imagination and thoughts are always, or indeed at any "time, in his own power? Let us, therefore, learn humility, and seek the "Divine favour above all things. And while we endeavour to make a right "use of the rules he has prescribed, or gives us grace to discover, for puri-"fying and improving our nature, let us look up for aid to him, whose influ-"ence alone can render them successful."*

His next Dissertation is that on *Dreaming*. Of this production he was himself exceedingly fond: and yet it cannot be said, I think, to add much to our stock of ideas. The truth is, Dr Beattie was a great observer of his own dreams, and therefore has probably attached more importance to the subject than any thing so much out of our own power may seem to deserve. An abridgment of this Dissertation on Dreaming is inserted in the "Mirror," Nos. 73 and 74, and it is mentioned above, p. 73.

Dr Beattie's next, and by much his longest and most elaborate, Dissertation, is that on the *Theory of Language*. It combines, indeed, much learning and great knowledge of the human mind, with deep philosophical research; and as it was a subject which he had studied profoundly, he seems to have treated it with more than common ability, so as to have left little for the scholar to wish for.

He has divided his Dissertation into two parts, in which he treats,

1. Of the Origin and General Nature of Speech.

2. Of Universal Grammar.

The faculty of speech, he says, to what class soever of human powers we refer it, is one of the distinguishing characters of our nature; none of the inferior animals being in any degree possessed of it. For we must not call by the name of *speech* that imitation of human articulate voice, which parrots and some other birds are capable of; speech implying thought and consciousness, and the power of separating and arranging our ideas, which are fa-

* Dissertations Moral and Critical, p. 205.

culties peculiar to rational minds. That some inferior animals should be able to mimic human articulation, will not seem wonderful, when we recollect, that even by machines certain words have been articulated; but that the parrot should annex thought to the word he utters, is as unlikely as that a machine should do so. *Rogue* and *knave* are uttered by every parrot; but the words they stand for are incomprehensible, except by beings endued with reason and a moral faculty.

It has, however, been a common opinion, and is probable enough, that there may be, among irrational animals, something which, by a *figure*, we may call *language*: some mode by which one animal can make his thoughts, his intentions, and his wishes known to another of his own species. This is so well authenticated, as scarcely to admit of a doubt.* Pope has elegantly employed the epithet *half-reasoning elephant* to this purpose, even as the instinctive economy of bees is figuratively called *government*. This at least is evident, that the natural voices of one animal are in some degree intelligible, or convey particular feelings or impulses to others of the same species. To dogs and horses, and even to other creatures of less sagacity, the voice of their master soon becomes familiar; and they learn to perform certain actions, on receiving certain audible or visible signals from those whom they are wont to obey. This, however, is a proof, rather of their docility, and of the quickness of their eye and ear, than of any intelligence in regard to language; and these, and the like animal voices, have no analogy with human speech. For, first, men speak by art and imitation, whereas the voices in question are wholly instinctive: for, that a dog, which had never heard another bark, would notwithstanding bark himself, admits of no doubt; and that a man, who had never heard any language, would not speak any, is equally certain.

After having treated, somewhat anatomically, of the organs of speech, and the manner in which it is formed, Dr Beattie proceeds to consider the English alphabet; and, in the course of this disquisition, he introduces the art of teaching those who are deaf and dumb to speak. He has also a chapter on the numbers and measures of English poetry, as depending on emphasis; their numbers and varieties, illustrated in a very entertaining manner, by apposite examples.

Dr Beattie then examines the absurdity of the Epicurean doctrine of the origin of language, that it is of human invention; and he proves, that if ever there was a time when all mankind were, as the Epicureans supposed, *mutum et turpe pecus*, a dumb and brutal race of animals, all mankind must, in the ordinary course of things, have continued dumb to this day. For, to such animals speech could not be necessary; as they are supposed to have existed for ages without it: and it is not to be imagined, that dumb and beastly savages would ever think of contriving unnecessary arts, whereof they had no example in the world around them, which they had never felt any inconvenience from the want of, and which never had been attempted by other ani-

* See the remarkable anecdote of the gentleman's dog at St Alban's, mentioned in Ringley's "Animal Biography," Vol. I. p. 226.

mals. Speech, therefore, it is clear, if invented at all, must have been invented, either by children, who were incapable of invention, or by men who were incapable of speech; and therefore, reason, as well as history, intimates, that mankind in all ages must have been *speaking animals*; the young having constantly acquired this art by imitating those who were elder. And we may warrantably suppose, that our first parents must have received it by immediate inspiration from the Almighty.

He then gives some account of the art of writing; its importance and origin; different sorts of it practised by different nations; a short history of printing: all of which topics he discusses in a brief but agreeable and amusing manner; and here he ends his first part. His second part of the *Theory of Language* treats at great length of *Universal Grammar*, in a very elaborate, philological disquisition, in which he acknowledges his obligations to Mr Harris, the author of "*Hermes*," and to Lord Monboddo, on "*The Origin* "*and Progress of Language*," although he occasionally differs from both these learned writers. He also mentions our countryman, the late Mr Thomas Ruddiman, with much respect; whom he characterises as the most accurate of all grammarians. He goes through, and examines with much care, the various parts of speech, with an eye to the knowledge of universal grammar, and leaves nothing unexamined that he thinks may illustrate the subject; a more minute analysis of it here, however, would be foreign from my present purpose.

His next Dissertation is of a much more popular and entertaining nature, on *Fable and Romance*. In the commencement of this dissertation, he has some general remarks on the nature of *Fable*, as a vehicle for the conveyance of moral instruction, such as, Jothan's parable of the trees choosing a king, in the book of "Judges," and the famous apologue of a contention between the parts of the human body, by which Menenius Agrippa satisfied the people of Rome, that the welfare of the state depended on the union of the several members of it. He then descants on the Greek apologues ascribed to Æsop, and the Latin ones of Phædrus, as master-pieces in this way of writing; which have hardly been equalled by the best of our modern fabulists. He then takes notice, that the Oriental nations have long been famous for fabulous narrative; which he accounts for from the indolence peculiar to the genial climates of Asia, and the luxurious life which the kings and other great men of those countries lead in their seraglios, which have made them seek for this sort of amusement, and set a high value on it. And here he mentions the celebrated collection of Oriental fables, commonly called, "The Arabian Nights Entertainment, or, the Thousand and One "Tales."

This leads him to take notice, that in the "Spectator," "Rambler," and "Adventurer," there are many fables in the Eastern manner, most of them very pleasing, and of a moral tendency. "Rasselas" by Johnson, and "Al-"moran and Hamet" by Hawkesworth, are celebrated performances in this way. Addison excels in this sort of fable; and the *Vision of Mirza* in the "Spectator," is the finest piece of the kind any where to be met with.

Dr Beattie, proceeding in his Dissertation, divides modern prose fable into two kinds, the *Allegorical* and *Poetical*. The first he subdivides into the *Historical* and the *Moral*, and the second into the *Serious* and the *Comic*. Of these four species of modern fable, he treats in their order, illustrating his subject with apposite and pleasing examples; in the course of which he gives the characters of a number of our most celebrated and popular productions of this nature: and, according to his uniform practice, omitting no opportunity of checking vice, and enforcing a love of virtue and religion. Thus, in speaking of Swift's "Gulliver's Travels," and "Tale of a Tub," while he does ample justice to the wit, the humour, the satire, so largely to be found in those celebrated performances, Dr Beattie reprobates with the utmost severity, as he had already done on a former occasion, (see p. 320.) the plan of the author, who, in the last of the four voyages, has exerted himself to the utmost in an absurd and abominable fiction, presenting us with rational beasts and irrational men, in direct contradiction to the most obvious laws of nature; and because there must be something of an irreligious tendency in a work, which, like this, ascribes the perfection of reason and of happiness to a race of beings, who are said to be destitute of every religious idea. But what is yet worse, if any thing can be worse, this tale represents human nature itself as the object of contempt and abhorrence. "Let the ridicule of "wit," says Dr Beattie, "be pointed at the follies, and let the scourge of "satire be brandished at the crimes of mankind; all this is both pardonable "and praise-worthy, because it may be done with a good intention, and pro- "duce good effects. But when a writer endeavours to make us dissatisfied "with that Providence who has made us what we are, and whose dispensa- "tions towards the human race are so peculiarly and so divinely benefi- "cent, such a writer, in so doing, proves himself the enemy, not of man "only, but of goodness itself: and his work can never be allowed to be in- "nocent."

The "Tale of a Tub," Dr Beattie goes on to say, is another allegorical fable, by the same masterly hand; and, like the former, supplies no little matter, both of admiration and of blame. As a piece of humorous writing it is unequalled. The subject is religion; but the allegory, under which he typifies the *Reformation*, is too mean for an argument of so great dignity; and tends to produce in the mind of the reader, some very disagreeable associations of the most solemn truths with ludicrous ideas.

Dr Beattie now enters on what he considers as the chief part of his subject, the rise and progress of the *Modern Romance*, or *Poetical Prose Fable*, which, being connected with so many topics of importance, if fully illustrated, he says, would throw great light upon the history and politics, the manners and the literature of these latter ages.

In the progress of his Dissertation, accordingly, he gives a most instructive, distinct, and concise, account of the state of Europe during what are called the *dark* or *middle ages*, of those northern nations who over-ran the Roman empire, of the form of policy introduced by them, which is commonly called the feudal government; this government it was, which, among

many other strange institutions, gave rise to chivalry, and it was chivalry which gave birth and form to that sort of fabulous writing, which we term *Romance*. Here he gives a most entertaining account of the *Knights-errant*, who flourished at this time in Europe, of the *Crusades*, of the *Troubadours* and *Jongleurs*, and of the revival of letters in Italy and the southern provinces of France.

After having discussed these various topics briefly, but in a most agreeable and entertaining manner, he comes to the modern *Serious and Comic Romance*, which he analizes with great exactness, but with a degree of minuteness though which it was impossible here to follow him, while he criticises and characterises Richardson, Fielding, and Smollet, pointing out the respective merits and defects of each in a very masterly manner. He concludes this Dissertation with the following very just and useful observations: "Let not the usefulness of romance-writing," says he, "be estimated by "the length of my discourse upon it. *Romances* are a dangerous recreation. "A few, no doubt, may be friendly to good taste and good morals; but far "the greater part are unskilfully written, and tend to corrupt the heart and "stimulate the passions. A habit of reading them breeds a dislike to his-"tory, and all the substantial parts of knowledge; withdraws the attention "from nature and truth; and fills the mind with extravagant thoughts, and "too often with criminal propensities. I would, therefore, caution my "young readers," says he, "against them; or if he must, for the sake of "amusement, and that he may have something to say on the subject, in-"dulge himself in this way now and then, let it be sparingly and seldom."

Dr Beattie's next Dissertation is on the "Attachments of Kindred."

He prefaces this Essay with a note, in which he tells us, that there are modern authors, who, from an excessive admiration of the Greek policy, seem to have formed erroneous opinions in regard to some of the points touched on in this discourse. With a view to those opinions, the discourse was written several years ago. Afterwards, when a book called "Thely-"phthora" appeared, he had thoughts, he says, of enlarging these remarks, so as to make them comprehend an examination of it. This the authors of the "Monthly Review" rendered unnecessary, by giving a very ingenious, learned, and decisive, confutation of that profligate system. He therefore publishes his Essay, he says, as it was first written; satisfied that Mr Madan's book, whatever private immoralities it may promote among the licentious and ignorant, will have no weight with the public, nor deserve farther animadversion.

In this Dissertation we do not indeed meet with any thing very new. The usual arguments in favour of marriage, and against polygamy, on the mutual relations between parent and child, and the various systems that have been formed by legislators respecting education, are detailed with precision, and in a most agreeable manner. Upon the whole, his general conclusion is, that the present system, according to which society is constituted in modern Europe, is the most congenial to our nature, and the most productive of virtue, as well as happiness, to mankind.

His concluding Dissertation is entitled, "Illustrations of Sublimity;" in which he has unfolded in a very pleasing manner, and explained by well-chosen examples, chiefly from the poets, the true principles of sublimity, as they are founded in human nature. This is an excellent Essay.

Note [Z.] p. 278.

The Reverend George Carr, the excellent man who is the subject of this note, was born at Newcastle, 16th February, 1704, and educated at St John's College, Cambridge, where he took the degree of Bachelor of Arts. Soon after his return to Newcastle he went into orders, and in the year 1737 was appointed senior clergyman of the episcopal chapel at Edinburgh, where he spent the remainder of his days; and officiated for the space of nine-and-thirty years, during three-and-twenty of which, I had the happiness of being his very constant hearer. Of his merit as a preacher, his posthumous discourses bear ample testimony. They do not indeed contain the profound, though somewhat abstracted, reasonings of Butler, nor the laboured but elegant discussions of Sherlock, neither the learning of Tillotson, nor the declamation of Seed; but they exhibit the most useful and important truths of the Gospel, not only with plainness and perspicuity, but in language always elegant, and seldom incorrect. I may even go farther, and add, that Mr Carr's style often rises into eloquence; and that in its general features, of plainness without vulgarity, and earnestness without bombast, in its equal distance from obscurity, and from useless amplification, it exhibits no common model of that sober and chastened eloquence, which ought ever to be studied in discourses of the pulpit.

In each discourse he makes choice of one single topic of belief or practice, which he illustrates and enforces by all the principal motives that can be urged, neither too briefly, so as to leave his argument imperfect, nor at so great length as to give no room for any addition by an attentive and well-informed reader. His discourses are in a peculiar manner distinguished by the most engaging spirit of charity, of moderation, of benevolence, continually inculcating the love of God and our neighbour as the sum of the law; and recommending the government and regulation of our appetites, passions, and affections, as the best method of securing happiness on earth as well as hereafter.

If Mr Carr's composition can be deemed in any respect negligent or incorrect, it is chiefly from a degree of redundancy, when he occasionally repeats the same thought, though almost always with a variety of expression; a fault, if it be a fault, that passed unnoticed in the pulpit, for which alone these discourses were originally intended, and which he would no doubt have corrected, had he lived to prepare them for publication. His delivery, though not animated, was graceful and pleasing; and though it might be said to border somewhat on monotony, those of my readers who remember it will agree with me in the declaration, that he never failed to engage and preserve the attention of his hearers; and that every word he uttered, every doctrine he taught, every virtue he recommended, came strongly enforced

by the purity of his morals and the exemplary piety of his blameless life. With all the good-breeding of a gentleman, he was a cheerful entertaining companion; and though his manners were most irreproachable, they had no tincture of either rigour or austerity. His patient suffering under the most excruciating tortures of the gout, with which, though extremely temperate, he had been for many years violently afflicted, was most exemplary; and cannot be better illustrated than by the following private letter to one of his oldest and most intimate friends, written a few weeks before his death, the copy of which was found among his papers. I feel a pleasure in inserting it, as so strongly characteristic of my departed friend.

"I ought much sooner to have acknowledged your last letter; but in-
"disposition must be my apology. I flattered myself, that after a succes-
"sion of fits of the gout from January to June, I should have had an interval
"of health this summer as usual; but this is not the case: and I fear I am
"doomed to a perpetual gout, either fixed or wandering. If it were in my
"option, I do not know whether I should chuse to hold existence upon these
"terms. I own to you, I am one of those, who would not wish to run the
"race of life over again, if the ground were to be marked out precisely with
"the same pleasures and pains. I shudder when I look forward to winter,
"and take a view of the terrible road I expect to pass. But I shall then
"probably be near the ending post; and then, adieu to pain. Then, I hope,
"existence will become extremely eligible; for surely it was meant upon the
"whole a favour to every created being. The Creator would never have
"introduced us into existence, if he saw that we should be sufferers by it.
"He, who has the sole disposal of pleasures and pains, and can weigh them
"with the utmost accuracy, will certainly order matters so, that the former
"shall at last preponderate. But no more of these grave reflections. I have
"the pleasure to inform you," * * * &c. &c.

In this heavenly frame of mind he continued faithfully to discharge the duties of his sacred function, calmly looking for, but not soliciting, his dissolution, until the morning of Sunday the 18th August, 1776, when, after having selected the discourse which he meant that day to deliver from the pulpit, he suddenly expired. An awful warning to those who survive! For how few like him are so well prepared for a summons so unlooked for? yet how uncertain are we, that the same sudden fate may not be our own! How studious, then, ought we to be, that our lives, like his, may be pure and uncorrupted by the business, the follies, the vices, of the world, so that when God shall require our souls of us, we may not be surprised in an hour when we are least thinking of it.

His widow did me the honour to put his manuscripts into my hands, from which, with the assistance of a friend, I made choice of this volume now in print, as the most finished, and therefore the most proper for publication. I accepted of this task with singular pleasure; and endeavoured to execute it with care and attention. It made me happy to contribute in any way to the perpetuating the memory, and rendering the virtues and the talents more extensively known, of one with whose friendship I had been hon-

oured during many years. The veneration I shall ever retain for the memory of this excellent man, will plead my excuse, I trust, for having dwelt longer on this character than might otherwise seem necessary.

Note [AA.] p. 282.

This reference applies equally with that at [Y.] to the same volume of "Dissertations Moral and Critical."

Note [BB.] p. 297.

A similar reference to the same person with that at [R.] p. 105.

Note [CC.] p. 302.

Mr Garrick was born 28th February, 1716. His father, Captain Garrick, a gentleman of respectable character, on retiring from the army, fixed his residence at Lichfield, where his son received his education, the latter part of it at an academy opened in that neighbourhood by the celebrated Dr Samuel Johnson; whence, notwithstanding the disparity of years, an intimate friendship commenced between these two eminent men, which lasted during the rest of their lives.

Johnson not succeeding, however, with his academy, young Garrick and he resolved to try their fortunes in London; whither they accordingly repaired in spring, 1737. In thus relating their first outsetting together, it is curious to remark the diversity of their subsequent fortunes in the world; and I believe it was not without envy, as well as indignation, that Dr Johnson saw his fellow-traveller start at once into celebrity, and speedily amass a large fortune, by the exercise of a profession, which he always affected to view with some contempt; while he himself, who rose to the first station in literature, continued in poverty during the greatest part of his long life; and, after struggling with all the hardships attendant on the profession of a mere author, condemned to write for daily bread, arrived, even at last, at no more than a very moderate income.

Garrick's original destination was the bar; and on his arrival in London he was entered of Lincoln's-Inn. He soon, however, abandoned the pursuit of the law, as well as of business, in which he had made an unsuccessful attempt as a wine-merchant. Having now lost both his father and mother, however, (to whose feelings he had hitherto sacrificed his own inclinations) he found himself at liberty to indulge his darling passion for the stage, and he prepared himself in earnest for that employment, in which nature meant him so highly to excel. His diffidence prevented him from appearing at first on a London theatre; and he embraced the opportunity of commencing his noviciate, by acting with a company of players at Ipswich, in summer, 1741. His first character was Aboan, in Southern's "Oroonoko," which he performed under the assumed name of Lyddall. The applause he met with was equal to his most sanguine wishes; and he afterwards frequently appeared there in the course of the season, with a success which answered all his views in this distant noviciate.

After having thus tried his powers, and having studied with great assiduity a variety of parts, he ventured, on the 19th October, 1741, to present himself before a London audience, at the theatre in Goodman's-Fields, in the character of Richard the Third. His performance was received not only with approbation, but astonishment. The same play was repeated six or seven times successively. And such was the universal applause which followed this young actor, that the more established houses of Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden were deserted: he drew after him to the city the fashionable inhabitants of St. James's; and the coaches of the nobility were to be seen, says one of his biographers,* from Temple-Bar to White-Chapel. Nor was this merely the fashion of a day; they who had seen the most esteemed actors, the Booths, the Wilkes's, and the Cibbers of former times, confessed, that he had exceeded all of them in the variety of his exhibitions, and equalled the ablest of them in the most appropriate of their parts.

The versatility of his talents was probably beyond example in the history of the stage. He was distinguished not only in the most eminent of Shakespeare's tragic characters, to which he peculiarly bent the whole energy of his powers, Macbeth, Lear, Richard, Hamlet; but he was unrivalled, also, in the comic parts of Benedick, Bayes, Ranger, Sir John Brute, Abel Drugger, and many others of a similar description. To those who were accustomed to the stage as it then appeared, he broke forth at once as a theatrical meteor, banishing rant, bombast, and grimace, and restoring nature, ease, simplicity, and genuine humour. And it is Garrick's best eulogy, that although we have seen a Mrs Cibber, a Mrs Pritchard, a Mrs Barry, a Mrs Yates, a Mrs Siddons, all of them great *actresses* in their various ways, no *actor* has appeared since his day, (I speak it without derogation of any, either living or dead,) who, in my mind at least, has possessed the art of expressing with equal force the effusions of comic gaiety and of tragic terror, or who deserves, in these respects, to be placed at all in competition with him. Nor is it without a more than ordinary degree of emotion, that, at this long interval, I now retrace, "in my mind's eye," the various scenes in which I have so often beheld him with supreme delight, and remember that these matchless exhibitions can be seen no more.

As a manager, a situation which Mr Garrick held at Drury-Lane theatre during many years, the stage owed him great obligations for the decorum which he preserved in the pieces that were represented; banishing all those of an improper tendency, which the licentious temper of a former age had suffered to appear. As a comic writer, too, he enriched the stage with several pieces of distinguished merit; and his prologues and epilogues, as well as several small pieces of lighter poetry, are excellent of their kind.

After having thus continued, during the long period of five-and-thirty years, to delight the public with his unrivalled excellence in his profession, finding his bodily health much broken, while his powers of acting were still unimpaired, he wisely formed the resolution of retiring from the stage; which I saw him do on the 10th June, 1776. He lived but a short time after, and died 20th January, 1779.

* Davies's "Life of Garrick," Vol. I. p. 49.

Beside the public applause and admiration, of which Mr Garrick enjoyed so large a share, he had the happiness to possess the friendship of a numerous and splendid circle of those who were most eminent for rank, fortune, and literary accomplishments, of his time. As he had acquired an opulent fortune, he lived with splendid hospitality; and his convivial powers made him the delight of every company of which he made a part. Johnson, after having borne this emphatic testimony in favour of Garrick's superior merit on the stage, "that he was the only actor he had ever seen, whom he could "call a master both in tragedy and comedy," concluded with this compliment to his social talents, "and after all, I thought him less to be envied on "the stage than at the head of a table:"* a sentiment in which it appears both Mrs Montagu and Dr Beattie entirely concurred.

It is with pleasure, too, that I add another testimony of Johnson's in his favour, of a more valuable nature: When Garrick was accused of avarice, Johnson said, "I know that Garrick has given away more money than any "man in England that I am acquainted with; and that not from ostentatious "views."†

I have always deemed it a piece of good fortune, that I had the opportunity of being introduced to Mr Garrick's acquaintance; and while I shared with the world in the admiration of his public talents, of witnessing the fascination of his manners in private life.

Note [DD.] p. 323.

The publication of the "Mirror" was undertaken at Edinburgh by a set of friends, chiefly of the Scottish bar, whose attachment to literary pursuits was congenial; and who, meeting frequently in the intercourse of business or society, found their conversation insensibly turn upon subjects of manners, of taste, and of literature; until by one of those accidental resolutions, of which the origin cannot easily be traced, it was determined to put their thoughts into writing, and to read them for the entertainment of each other. These essays thus assumed the form; and soon after, some one suggested the idea of a periodical paper. Having resolved to print their lucubrations, the selection of materials for their work afforded them a most agreeable amusement; and they constituted themselves into a club, which met and decided on the merits of those pieces, which, like the lion's mouth of their predecessor the "Spectator," were conveyed to them anonymously through the hands of their publisher, as well as those furnished by themselves.

* Boswell's "Life of Johnson," Vol. IV. p. 253. 8vo. ed. 4th.

† Boswell's "Life of Johnson," Vol. III. p. 72. 8vo. ed. 4th.

It has been told to me by a friend, who heard Sir William Jones relate, that he went in the same coach with Dr Johnson to Mr Garrick's funeral, and that he employed the whole time in going from the Adelphi, where Garrick's house was, to Westminster-Abbey, in pronouncing a studied eulogy upon his deceased friend, of which Sir William particularly remembered the following expression: "Mr Garrick and his profession have "been equally indebted to each other. His profession made him rich, and he made his "profession respectable." This was well said, in Johnson's best manner, and deserves not to be forgotten.

The very respectable list, prefixed to the later editions, of the names of the authors of each paper, shows of what distinguished characters this literary society consisted; and it is not a little remarkable, that of those essayists, no fewer than six either are, or have been, Judges of the supreme courts of law in Scotland;* other members of the society were equally respectable for talents and literary accomplishments.

The gentlemen who thus associated themselves for the entertainment of the public, by these periodical papers, conscious of the advantage, indeed of the necessity at first, of concealment, kept themselves entirely unknown, even to their publisher, until the whole was finished, when concealment had ceased to be necessary; as the public approbation had left them no longer under any apprehension as to the reception which their labours would meet with from the world. The intercourse between them and their publisher was carried on by Mr Henry Mackenzie, from whom he received the manuscript from time to time, although he knew that others beside that gentleman were engaged in the undertaking. Mr Mackenzie, who not only undertook the general conduct of the work, but who also contributed more papers to the common stock than any other member of the association, was well known to the literary world by various pieces, which had been extremely well received. The first was an ethic epistle, printed anonymously, by the title of the "Pursuits of Happiness;" a poem of very considerable merit, especially when considered as the production of so young a writer. His next work had drawn to its author much attention, and had stamped him with the character of a writer of original genius, and distinguished talents. It was his well known novel, "The Man of Feeling;" of the public approbation of which, the best proof is its having gone through so great a number of editions. He had also published two other novels, "Julia de Roubigne," and "The Man of the World," which have been favourably received, and of which new editions continue to be called for: and he had brought on the stage at Edinburgh, in the year 1773, a tragedy named the "Prince of Tunis," where it had the advantage of the great powers of that capital actress, Mrs Yates, but has never since been revived.

I have said elsewhere,† that periodical papers are a species of publication almost peculiar to England, although Dr Beattie observes, that some of Seneca's epistles are compositions of the same character. A few years ago, an attempt was made in France, by the celebrated novelist, Mad. Riccoboni, to introduce a periodical paper at Paris, under the title of "L'Abeille;" but it did not succeed, and only three numbers were printed. The first series of these popular essays that appeared in England, the first at least of any great reputation, was the "Tatler," projected and begun by Sir Richard Steele, who soon received a powerful co-adjutor in Mr Addison. The "Tat-

* Lord Abercromby, Lord Craig, and Lord Cullen, were original members of the club, or association. Lord Hailes, Mr Baron Gordon, and Lord Woodhouselee, contributed papers as correspondents.

† See supra, p. 376.

"ler" was followed by the "Spectator," of which, as also of the "Guardian," the principal writers were Steele and Addison, with the occasional assistance of Pope, Budgell, Lord Hardwicke, and Dr Pearce, Bishop of Rochester, who only died the 29th June, 1774, beyond the eighty-fifth year of his age, and was the last surviving writer of the "Spectator." From the publication of those three celebrated papers, of which the "Spectator" is, I think, generally allowed to be the best, and Addison unquestionably entitled to the preference as a writer, an interval of almost forty years intervened before any paper of pre-eminent merit made its appearance, when the "Rambler," and afterwards the "Idler," were published by Dr Johnson. Then appeared the "Adventurer"* by Dr Hawkesworth, with some assistance from Dr Johnson and Mr Warton, which was succeeded by the "World," chiefly written by Mr Moore, Mr Jenyns, Mr Cambridge, Lord Chesterfield, Horace Walpole (Lord Orford), Sir David Dalrymple (Lord Hales). The "Connoisseur" was written by Lloyd and Thornton.

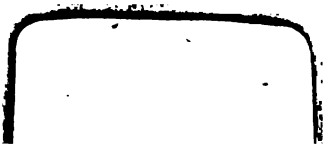
After a considerable length of time, the "Mirror" first, and next the "Lounger," by the same set of friends, were published at Edinburgh. And it is no mean praise, that these two papers still continue to maintain their place among so many other excellent productions of a similar nature. The "Mirror" and "Lounger," in truth, are written with elegance; and many of them, those by Mr Mackenzie in particular, on serious and important subjects, in a manner that do honour to the heart of the writer as a moralist, as well as to his taste and judgment as a polite scholar.†

Several of the characters are well drawn, and well supported; and notwithstanding the narrow limits of local manners, by which the writers have found themselves occasionally circumscribed, their lucubrations will be read with interest, as a valuable addition to the stock of English polite literature.

The "Mirror" commenced 23d January, 1779, and continued till 27th May, 1780. The "Lounger" commenced 5th February, 1785, and terminated 6th January, 1787. No similar publication is carrying on at present.

* See supra, p. 376. † See "Mirror," No. 110.

LIST OF DR BEATTIE's WORKS.

Poems, ...	first published in the year	1760.
Essay on Truth, ...	ditto,	1771.
Minstrel, Book I.	ditto,	1771.
——— Book II.	ditto,	1774.
Essay on Truth, ...	ditto,	1776.
——— on Poetry and Music, ...		
——— on Laughter and Ludicrous Composition,		
——— on Classical Learning, ...		
Dissertations on Memory and Imagination, .	ditto,	1783.
——— on Dreaming, ...		
——— on the Theory of Language, .		
——— on Fable and Romance, . . .		
——— on the Attachments of Kindred,		
——— on Illustrations of Sublimity, .		
Evidences of Christianity, ...	ditto,	1786.
Elements of Moral Science, Vol. I.	ditto,	1790.
——— Vol. II.	ditto,	1793.

A translation into Dutch of the "Essay on Truth" was published at Utrecht in the year 1773; and the first volume of "Elements of Moral "Science" was also translated into the same language, soon after the book was published here, by Frederick Henry Hennett, Professor of Mathematics and Experimental Philosophy in the university of Utrecht. Whether a translation was also published of the second volume of that work, I do not find any trace among his papers.